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A Château at the Front



THE CHÂTEAU AND ITS CHÂTELAINE

A Château at the Front

1914—1918

By the
MARQUISE DE FOUCAULT

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE B. IVES

With Illustrations



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INTRODUCTION

MADAME LA MARQUISE DE FOUCAULT left her native Anjou in 1913, having bought the château of Pronleroy in Picardy. She had hardly finished moving in in 1914, when the war broke out. In the middle of August, the great German invasion swept past Pronleroy on its thrust for Paris, and for twenty days the château was behind the German lines. Then the tide of battle turned at the Marne and Pronleroy emerged again with the French between it and the enemy. The margin was narrow, however, and, as both sides settled down to trench warfare, the line ran close enough to the château to make it very definitely a part of the 'advanced zone.' The front shifted a little nearer or a little farther as German or French offensives prevailed, but never till July, 1918, did the sound of firing, the nightly whirr of hostile aeroplanes, the threat of capture (more than once imminent) cease to be a continual part of daily life to the inhabitants of the château.

Inhabitants, because the château was never 'evacuated.' It was, in a scene of desolation, a house where, as General Mangin said, life went on. For, instead of abandoning her new-found home and retreating to shelter with some of her numerous family in Anjou, as she might have done without blame, the Marquise de Foucault stuck to what she felt was her post, and for four years, except for a few short visits to Anjou, and to Orléans, where her daughters were at school (her sixteen-year-old daughter, Simone, was at Pronleroy with her a large part of the time), she played, amidst the gunfire, her rôle of hostess to an endless succession of division, corps, or army staffs, and miscellaneous officers, men, and refugees, quartered at the château or on its grounds.

At the beginning of the war, the Marquise de Foucault's

daughter Simone started a scrapbook with newspaper clippings and bits of village talk about the war that interested her. When the daughters went away to school in October, their mother took up the idea, and, inspired by the example of her ancestress, the Marquise de la Rochejacquelein, who kept a similar journal of her life during the Royalist Insurrection in La Vendée in 1793, she wrote down from day to day the incidents of which her 'life at the front' was made up. The interest of the journal grew upon her and made her expert in the art of drawing from the officers quartered with her narratives of the noteworthy days of their campaigns, manners of interpreting the war that differed according to the branch of service to which the speaker belonged: dashing confidence in the cavalry, for instance, solemn obstinacy among the artillerymen. The officers of the Colonials, whom she found all impulse and enthusiasm, fighters for the sake of fighting, interested her particularly because they often spoke to her of a cousin of her family's, the Père de Foucault, an extraordinary man, who, at first a brilliant officer in Algeria, then an explorer in Morocco, became finally, inspired by his faith, a mystic personage, a marabout, treated almost as sacred by the Arab 'lords of the great tents.' He was killed in 1917 in a tribal quarrel, believed to have been instigated by the Germans, and was soon after canonized at Rome.

The Marquise de Foucault fully realized that in her war-surrounded château she was a spectator at first hand of history in the making. Her journal describes vividly the feeling of tenseness, of mingled misgiving and hope, that characterized the days in June, 1918, when Mangin directed from Pronleroy the first battle in the new strategy of the 'war of movement' that definitely marked the turn of the tide for the armies of the Allies. In 1927-28, Madame la Générale Mangin made a pilgrimage in memory of her husband, lately dead, to all the places connected with his vic-

tories in that famous summer campaign of 1918. 'We know,' she wrote to Madame de Foucault à *propos* of the battle of June 11, 'that on that day Luck changed sides, but future generations must know it too.' So it was decided to commemorate the day by dedicating a tablet in the courtyard of the château of Pronleroy. At the instance of Madame Mangin, the part of the Marquise de Foucault's journals describing the last three days of Mangin's stay at the château was published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The ceremony of dedication took place on the 30th day of June, 1929, in the presence of about three thousand people — veterans from the neighboring villages, representatives of thirty-two communes more or less involved in the battle of Méry-Courcelles (the battle of June 11), groups from military schools and patriotic associations, General de Rascas, General Caron, relatives of Madame de Foucault and descendants of the Pronleroy, Madame Mangin and her four sons, and many other distinguished people, among whom was the American, Paul Rockwell, of the Foreign Legion.

Since the commemorative plaque has been placed on its entrance pavilion, Pronleroy has become a part of tourists' itineraries, and on Sundays in summer they come to pay their respects to the memory of the hero and to the Château at the Front from which he directed one of the most brilliant of his victories.

A Château at the Front

A Château at the Front

1914

June 25, 1914

OUR moving in is almost done. There are only a few tables left to be put in place in the parlors, the books to be arranged in the library. The bedrooms are ready to receive their guests.

The coming of summer will bring home Simone, Suzanne, and Denyse, my daughters, who are at school in Orléans; also an old friend of my father, Abbé Lépine, the last survivor of the men who used to come to La Grifferie, the old family estate in La Sarthe, which was sold thirty years ago and which I have always regretted.

This estate of Pronleroy, which I have just bought, reminds me of La Grifferie by the fine condition of its oval courtyard surrounded by lindens, and the noble aspect of the house itself, whose two wings form the sides of a second court with stone steps.

June 26

My daughters have arrived! What a jubilation! The gardener's children and the tradesmen's bring bunches of flowers, and recite complimentary speeches to the 'demoiselles of the château'; we have champagne to drink; my excited daughters run about through the flower-filled parlors.

'How pretty and bright this gold salon is with its four big windows and its gray wainscoting!... How quiet it is in the great park!... How lovely it's going to be to live here!'

The only drawback is that the horse that I have bought hasn't come. At last the horse arrives; my daughters clap

their hands like the little girls they still are. The eldest is dark, with bright eyes and a very decided air; Suzanne is a dreamy blonde with blue eyes; and the third is just a pretty little scamp of twelve, with the charming face of a dark Italian Madonna, and big blue eyes.

Trampling in the courtyard.

Fievé, my servant, introduces us to the animal which he has just taken from his truck: it is a very fine brown bay, which we christen Lamballe, from the name of the stable from which we got him through the help of my cousin Dupont-Auberville.

June 27

After we have overcome a few difficulties in adjusting the straps, and Lamballe is harnessed at last, Simone and I start off in our victoria to Saint-Just, to meet Abbé Lépine.

The abbé, beaming, grasps our hands.

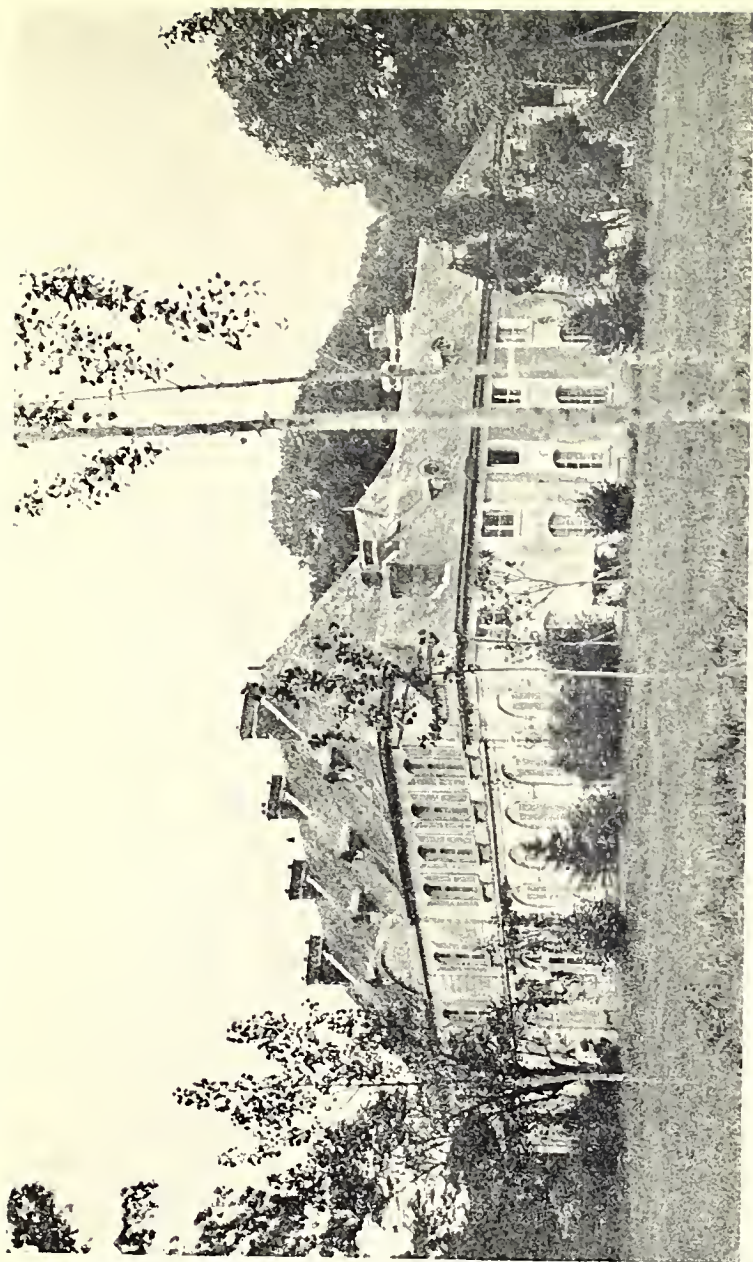
'It's as if I had gone back to the days of my youth, and was just coming to visit Madame la Comtesse, your grandmother, with Monsieur Adhémar, at La Grifferie!'

After several years passed in hired premises, picked up by chance, my girls and I have the restful and delightful feeling of a definitive home. Everything interests us in the rural occupations which filled my childhood's days in La Sarthe and my children's in Anjou.

For our own satisfaction, we wish, so far as possible, to have Pronleroy remind us of my dear La Grifferie; to have it take on that touch of Old France, slightly Italianized, that harmonizes with the great tiled rooms filled with pictures; to have it assume that *lived-in* look which is so lacking in the dead beauty of museums.

The salon in the middle is to be called *La Grande Salle*, as at La Grifferie.

Durandeau, the son of my upholsterer, at Angers, is finishing the hangings for the little pink salon; the valance



THE CHÂTEAU OF PRONLEROY

of the half-alcove, in which is the canopied couch, also is covered with the same *toile de Jouy* with big purple roses.

Fievé is our guide in adapting ourselves to the customs of this strange country — customs nearer those of the Belgians than those of our France of the west.

June 29

Sitting in the *salon de verdure* — a clump of shrubs to which we have given that name — we are gathering the sweet-smelling blossoms of the linden. Into great baskets standing on the ground, we pile the slender stems from the centuries-old lindens along the driveway.

Abbé Lépine, a very spry old man, a bit stout, a bit flushed, with the mischievous blue eyes of the peasants of La Sarthe, of which he is native, waves a newspaper violently over his head.

'Here's news for you, Madame la Marquise! The Archduke, heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife, were murdered yesterday at Sarajevo on their journey through Serbia!'

'Those Balkan nations can never keep quiet, Monsieur l'Abbé.... Poor beautiful duchess! If only she had remained an obscure little Countess Chotek!'

'But, madame, you talk as if you hadn't a suspicion that these murders may lead to the most horrible European complications — perhaps to a war, even!'

'Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé, war? What a horrible thing! In this age of ours! Why not an invasion while your head is turned?'

'When I was at Lude, at the Marquis de Talhouet's, the Minister of War in 1870, no one in June believed there would be a war.'

'But times have changed so much since then!... War is an affair of princes... the Republic will never make it... and that is not my personal opinion, abbé; it's that of every

business man I consulted during these last months when I was buying Pronleroy.... War! Maneuvers of the Bourse, it may be...'

'Why, then, madame, are the financiers talking here about "a short war"?''

'In any event, Monsieur l'Abbé, I don't see what there is in all this to disturb us. This Archduke Francis-Ferdinand, so German in all his sympathies, with his Chotek, will be succeeded as heir to the throne by a young prince over head and ears in love with his charming princess, the fair Archduchess Zita, all French at heart — a Bourbon-Parma, of the blood of our kings.'

'The newspapers don't take such an optimistic view of things, Madame la Marquise.'

'He who lives will see, abbé.... Meanwhile, look at my work... I was born to pluck lindens... my basket is full.'

'Oh! that's true enough, but when she sets about it, Madame la Marquise tires herself out with the work.'

'You are quite right, Fievé, my friend. The Marquise is like her father, Monsieur Adhémar, a glutton for work when she feels like it.... And you, children — doesn't it amuse you to pluck lindens?'

'Monsieur l'Abbé, when one is going to live through historical events, gathering linden blossoms leaves one cold.... Do you know, Simone, I am going to keep the newspapers with the interesting things that happen hereabout.'

'Oh, we all know, Suzanne, that you're the great scribbler of the family.'

'But as we shall all have to live through these historical events,' said Denyse, assuming an air of importance, 'each of us must describe them in her own way.'

August 2

The whole press is bordered with black. The abbé, impelled by the anxious tone of the newspapers, wants to go

to Paris to find out what is going on; he will go to-morrow morning and return next week; he insists that things will follow the same course as in 1870.

We shall have at dinner to-morrow Mesdemoiselles Thomas, the daughters of a prominent farmer of Pronleroy. I wish the dining-room was finished. They are just putting the last plaques and china plates in the panels of the wall. And they're hanging the old suits of armor over the porcelain stove. The long black damask curtains with yellow stripes are being hung.

Durandeau has had a letter from his family telling him to come home to Angers; the order of mobilization may be issued any day.

'Still more people going mad,' I say as he reads it to me. 'Well, as it's your last day at work, let's try to finish these four windows — they're the hardest.'

Fievé brings a second ladder and struggles to fix the cords, while Durandeau busies himself in nailing the festoons of laurel leaves under the balconies of the gray pavilion.

Suddenly the notes of a bell... solemn and melancholy... far apart... timid... hesitating... does it seem as if they stopped to take a breath?... come nearer and louder, ringing out now in a wild knell. And one by one, from all around the horizon, other bells reply, seized with the same frenzy — bells of Cressonsacq and bells of Lieuvillers, bells of L'Églantier, of Trois-Étots, of Noroy, of Ravenel — all, each in its different tone, clang with the same grief that overwhelms you, weep in anticipation of all the sufferings that are to come — bells that now, in full peal, ring the tocsin of disaster!

The two men jump down from their ladders.

'This means war!... We must go to the mayor's office to see about our mobilization.'

Durandean collects his tools, and goes up to his room to pack his clothes.

Fievé comes into the house, very swank.

'The mobilization is posted.... It couldn't go on like this! The French have had enough of it. We must show these accursed Prussians!... This thing isn't going to last. We shall be back by Christmas.... I start in the reserve on the 6th... But what will Arthémise say?'

Arthémise is his wife and my cook — a recalcitrant person if ever there was one.

August 3

My daughters appear in my room early, with a very important air, on returning from Mass.

'War was declared yesterday... it's been posted. Everybody is getting ready. Madame Dupérour says to tell you that there'll soon be nothing left at her shop.'

To satisfy their zeal, I send them out to buy things. They return about noon, bending under the weight of their baskets; but they bring, however, only a reduced weight of goods for each house. Simone asks for change; nobody will change large notes any more.

The first crack in our civilization — money has lost its omnipotence; we are going to find our path blocked by Necessity, a cruel goddess whom our 'soft living' had led us to forget.

August 4

We are working in the dining-room. Simone with a delighted air cuts her second shade, which falls very straight, following the thread of the material, as if it had been done by the upholsterer.

The cook, pale as death, opens the door.

'The gendarmes!'

'Here — why?'

'Not here, but in the village; they have come to requisition the horses.'

'Go out and find Fievé.'

'But, Madame la Marquise, first I must go and set up the other side of my window shutter. Those gendarmes won't fly away. And then, what am I going to say to them, with your horse which is not registered — that he is too old, that he isn't fit for work?'

Three quarters of an hour later, Fievé returns, having had something to drink with the gendarmes.

Yes, the horses have been requisitioned. I shall have to let them take Lamballe.

While serving dinner in the little dining-room, Fievé tells us the news that's going about the country.

'Poincaré's vessel has been captured by the German fleet; it seems, too, that Caillaux has been murdered by Calmette's son.'

We shrug our shoulders; these false reports are horrible.

August 5

The post becomes more and more irregular; the newspapers arrive in bundles. The news spreads by word of mouth, from one person to the next, and with all sorts of embroidery. The *Paris-Midi*, having announced the breaking off of telegraphic communication with Germany a few hours too soon, was seized and threatened with suppression if it continued to publish uncensored news. Is the press, then, no longer free?

The peace state of mind has disappeared; the war mentality has not yet taken shape; the dominating sensation still in all the young people — or rather in all those who have not seen other wars — is a vast astonishment, the sensation of a ghastly nightmare which will vanish on awaking.

August 6

My daughters are in a strange frame of mind. They do not realize the gravity of the moment; their prevailing sen-

timent is a sort of pride in taking a part in these events which history will perpetuate. A bookish frame of mind, if one may say so, like that of little girls just out of school.

For my part, the fear of financial difficulties, of domestic embarrassment, is not blended with any fear that I, a civilian, can be disturbed by events of a military nature. Exchanges of letters with those who have gone to the army — relatives, friends — bring comfort in hasty notes sent on leaving garrisons.

One is infected by the confidence the officers have in the success of our armies; by the tendency of certain ones to believe that the politicians will have found some way to prevent their fighting when they reach the frontier — and the certainty on the part of every one of a very short war.

Still no post to-day. Fievé tells us about his hunt for news at the wine-shops, where every one is talking about the murder of Jaurès; we don't believe it any more than we do the Caillaux murder. However, we decide to go after lunch-con to Neuville; with the going and coming of passengers in the cars, we may perhaps learn something.

We find the ticket-seller at the station in tears, completely demoralized; she is stifling with the chatter she is holding back, and unloads on us in a flood all that she knows.

'With ladies like you — who won't report me — one can open one's heart. I have been shocked and frightened. I would rather not have stayed here alone with my four little ones after my husband went away. But it is my job, and it seems that if you leave your post in time of war, you may have your head cut off. For a fortnight I have had so many secret dispatches, night and day, with orders not to mention them.'

I ask: 'Is the mobilization going on?'

'Better than you'd have believed; there are some who didn't go willingly and the gendarmes drove them with their gun-butts. There was one little rascal who said he

wouldn't get aboard the train, and the others yelled at him: "The same thing will happen to you as did to the fellow from Compiègne, who threw away his weapons so as to run away; the gendarme fired and he fell dead."

A plate-layer, who had been drinking a bit, came into the station, and said to the woman: 'Why did you tell them that? You mustn't talk to civilians; they are nothing. We are somebody, we are; look at your scarf; you are an official, bound to secrecy. You haven't seen anything — nor have I. All the same, since they shot the two poor devils from Méry, who shouted, "Down with the war!" the others go off with tears in their eyes, but they go. The devil of it is that the women and children who come with them to the station, they whine to make the stones cry. When I go, I won't say good-bye to anybody.'

A laborer comes along the road and joins the conversation; *he* is a patriot... he is.

'I don't know,' he says; 'at La Neuville there's the father of a family sent off... he was first thinking about his family; at Saint-Just there was a soldier, full of pep, who jumped off the train; at the first station, your good men begin to sing with the others... the "Marseillaise" one minute, Berlin the next; the next one... he just wants a chance to kill a Prussian; at Saint-Just he writes on his car: "Excursion train for Berlin." There's times when, if they should stop the mobilization, there'd be a revolution. They're going off with the idea of avenging the insults of 1870.'

'Oh, ba!' said the plate-layer; 'you'll avenge just nothing at all... we shan't win the war... and just make up your mind that to get our paw on Alsace, we'll have to have men... but mum!'

'You blasted coward!' burst in the ticket-seller, at the end of her patience and her silence. 'They're *in* Alsace; I have just now a letter from my brother... the French are at Mont la Tour.'

'Perhaps Mars la Tour,' I say.

'That may be — but up Lunéville way the 154th of the Line and the Eighth Chasseurs are marching on Altkirch... it seems they've won a big battle.'

The train comes in; they throw out two heavy mail pouches; several men who have come for news question the engine-driver.

'I say, what about Jaurès?'

'Gone!... mighty interesting. They've blown up still another Zeppelin. Here's a package of new tickets for you, Monsieur Tax-Collector.'

'So that's the tax-collector!' whisper my disgusted daughters; 'that little weasel-faced creature, with an inquisitive eye, looks like a spy. One sees them everywhere these days.'

We follow the man carrying the bags to the post-office; we carry our own newspapers. At the office the clerks sort the letters.

'Letters for the château.... Ah! important dispatches for the mayors, and the carrier not here. We shall have to have a messenger.'

My daughters offer their services as postmen; they offer to drop the letter for M. Tonnelier, our mayor, on our way home.

The carrier appears at the end of the road.

'Shall I give you back the letter?' inquires Simone.

'No; the carrier can take the one for the mayor of La Neuville.'

We set off at full speed, my daughters being afraid that some one will rob them of that precious document which they are carrying so proudly.

M. Tonnelier is not at his house, so we go on to the mayor's office. We are shown into the empty schoolroom. M. Tonnelier is standing at a desk reading papers. There are open portfolios before him, with the unfinished sentence:

'Civic courage will not fail to inspire...' There is also a blackboard, with a problem in white drawn on it.

The teacher went away on the first day of the mobilization.

August 7

The harvest is proceeding with feverish haste. The married men, who are called to the colors by squads, are working like beasts of the field.

We hear a drum; that must be for the passports of the Belgian workmen.

'No,' says Arthémise, when she comes back from the grocery shop, 'they have just proclaimed a state of siege. What does that mean? Is there anything else?'

We go to listen to the reading of the decree.

All authority is turned over to the army and the constabulary, to whom the mayors are made subordinate; that was the news contained in the parcel brought by my daughters in such haste yesterday.

I write to Madame d'Haussonville, President of the Red Cross, S.B.M., to offer Pronleroy as a hospital and my daughters and myself as nurses.

I give two letters to Fievé, commending him, in case he is wounded, to the care of Dr. Monprofit, of Angers, who has gone to a hospital at the front, and to Madame Carrel, nurse-major of the First Regiment of the Line. A tearful leave-taking with the good fellow, as he shakes hands with us.

Reine, the little maid from Nanteuil-le-Haudouin, will wait on table after this.

My daughters propose to the village women, who don't know what to do with their children, to send them to the château; they can amuse them in the afternoon by telling them stories; they will teach them their prayers and make them enjoy them.

Mallard, the butcher, has sent us a fine piece of beef from the 'last steer that will be killed in this place till the end of the war.' With a vegetable soup, this beef *en gelée*, with *petits pois* and compote of prunes and strawberries, constitutes our last 'before-the-war' dinner.

August 8

The curé says Mass for the troops who are starting for the army. On her way home, Suzanne meets Arthémise, who holds out an old newspaper with a very solemn air.

'Things are going very badly. The *Petit Parisien* doesn't give the news as Madame has it.'

We read the headlines of the newspaper that Madame Dupérourx sends me:

Proclamation of State of Siege in France... The Germans have violated French territory by passing through Luxembourg... Skirmishes: two officers and twenty Germans killed.

And they call that a *communiqué*!

There's nothing alarming in that; my daughters have repeated it in the village to check the incipient panic.

Our editor, Lulau, being mobilized, there is no one left to explain the news.

After dinner I go out with Simone, to water flowers, strawberries, and seedlings.

We hear the grumbling of a heavy storm in the distance. My daughters insist that it's the beating of drums. Flashes of lightning show that it is really a storm. We are startled at nothing. We prick up our ears at the faintest sound; we are conscious of a vague sort of fear. Simone prefers to pass her evenings in a shut-in place like the kitchen garden; she feels much safer there.

We are beginning to feel the restrictions of war by economizing with light. We place two candles between our rooms, with the result that all four rooms are equally ill-lighted.

August 9

We go about from house to house asking for news. All sorts of rumors are abroad. Some one says that Holland is coming into the war, Belgian territory having been violated. Even peaceable folk, like our keeper, Bouchez, exclaim: 'So much the better; that will make more people to kill Boches!'

The mentality of the fighting man is in process of formation.

At Madame Fontaine's we are told that in the farms roundabout they are killing steers, which are to be cut up in great pieces. The system of barter is coming back: M. Fontaine sells his wheat and takes bread for it, and pays his workmen with that; then he pays his own clerks with fine groceries, of which he is laying in abundant supplies.

At the Fontaines' I fell in with the curé of L'Églantier, who had come to say good-bye before joining the army. He has five brothers and two brothers-in-law with the colors; they say that one of them has disappeared in Alsace.

Have been to the station at La Neuville. Talked with the ticket-seller. She declares that they have found German spies with torpedoes to put on the tracks, so as to blow up the bridges and switches and interrupt the schedule of the mobilization trains. They have been arrested at Creil, Compiègne, Senlis, Moyenneville. She has seen some of them, she says, handcuffed in automobiles, in which they were being taken to Clermont, where they would be shot. The blacksmith tells us that our horse Lamballe is valued at fourteen hundred and fifty francs; he will be taken soon, as he is only six years old. We shall be paid in requisitions for goods.

August 10

People in the village are beginning to receive letters from the troops; despite the prohibition of giving information

about the route of the army, they speak in veiled words of fights in Alsace, of a victory at Altkirch, of a march on Mulhouse.

We set out with Madame Angèle for Saint-Just to buy provisions.

From the railroad bridge we see the military trains, all bedecked with flowers and flags; the bugles blow the charge on the platforms; the 'Marseillaise,' wine-inspired, is howled from one end of the train to the other; inscriptions written in chalk, 'Excursion train to Berlin!' 'The Guillotine for William!'

A nation of enthusiastic youth setting out for war as it might be for a ball.

Although tired by her trip to Saint-Just, Simone is going to Cressonsacq with our second maid, to console Marguerite Guislain, whose husband has broken his mowing-machine, on the last day that he had to work to finish his mowing. That is a calamity to those poor people, and the wife talks of jumping into a well.

We learn that they have taken our horse. Denyse saw him pass hitched to a line of horses being taken to Pontoise to join the regiment of artillery.

August 11

In these early days of the war, whenever I open a newspaper, I look first in the lists of 'Dead on the Field of Honor,' expecting to find the names of all my friends there. The *Écho de Paris* published this list on the first page of some copies; it appeared there that the Commandant de Mascureau was the first cavalry officer who fell in battle.¹ Then hope revives in every one that relatives and friends have been miraculously preserved; the morale of those at the rear is stiffening up; because we are living in uncer-

¹ The Comte de Mascureau was one of the heirs who offered Pronleroy for sale in 1910.

tainty, we must not fear the worst. The splendid confidence of officers who write you from the line of fire — 'Buck up! I shall not be killed' — conquers you little by little. There is, too, in women who are conscious of belonging to a martial race an atavism that comes to life, a certainty of victory that clings to the least glorious feat of arms.

My daughters, going to Mass, find the curé at the church door, reading the *Petit Parisien*. He calls out to them:

'Ah! this is magnificent! The French have entered Altkirch, and the flag is floating over Mulhouse.'

The most fantastic rumors are in circulation; the post-man reports:

'It seems they've thrown a hundred thousand Prussians into the Meuse.'

'If they're all in the same spot, the river must have overflowed,' returns Suzanne.

'They say four hundred thousand English landed at Ostend yesterday.'

The newspapers give some more probable details of the entry into Alsace. Our troops, the first body of Prussians being thrown back, advanced seven kilometres without meeting any second line of defense. We got as far as into Mulhouse amid cheers from the people; they hoisted the old French flags with the Imperial Eagles, that haven't been seen since 1870.

The old men shouted: 'Ah! these fine young fellows are coming to give us back our Alsace!'

My daughters are so eager to explain this victory at Mulhouse to their bunch of children that they forget a saucepan of pears on the kitchen stove which they have in charge. The château is filled with the horrible smell of something burning; the pears, transformed into charcoal, will not be eatable. My daughters go into the garden with their troop to pick some strawberries; evidently we shall have no dessert this evening; there are too many pickers —

the strawberries are eaten before they reach the dining-room.

My daughters, in their enthusiasm, would like to hoist the flag, ring the bells, sing a *Te Deum*. About five o'clock they go to the curé.

'Sing a *Te Deum*! Why?'

'The victorious entry of our troops into Mulhouse...'

'A small affair — a small affair.... The splendid thing, you know, is our heroic city of Liège... the Belgian troops in holding back the main attack of the Germans.'

All that my daughters can obtain from him is that at evening prayer there shall be sung a *Te Deum* without any other ceremony.

August 12

It is announced with beat of drum that everybody is forbidden to pass over any road between 6.30 A.M. and 6.30 P.M. Gendarmes are posted at all corners. The news that spies have been caught hereabout is confirmed. The false intelligence that caused a panic came from them.

Our cook persists in going at dawn every morning to her mother-in-law's, at Cernoy, to see her daughters. We tell her that she'll be arrested by the gendarmes, but nothing will overcome her obstinacy.

No newspapers here. I have been to La Neuville. Our druggist there — he is the only one — opens his parlor for us so that we can read our papers there in peace. There is talk about the encirclement of Liège. On our return, at Madame Dupérour's house we see the first two-franc and five-franc notes; there have been already two separate issues.

Called this evening on the Thomases; we learn there that a hospital is to be set up at Saint-Just. Perhaps then we shall be able to do something to help.

August 13

A very puzzling *communiqué*... 'Strategic retreat.' What a strange expression! Not a word about Liège or Mulhouse.

Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines and the Col du Bonhomme are still occupied.

There comes a reply from the S.B.M., which fills us with amazement: 'Pronleroy is too near the theater of hostilities to be used as a rest hospital.'

To keep busy, my daughters are making foot-warmers and pillows; perhaps they will be of some use.

August 14

We see in the papers that our Pretender, the Duc d'Orléans, has written to the Government to ask the privilege of serving France. After the very curt refusal in reply to his superb letter, the Prince enlists in the Belgian Red Cross. Fine letters also from the Duc de Vendôme and the Princes of Orléans-Bragance.

The mayor sends word to me that his commune has to take care of fugitives from Verdun; he sends the rural guard to inspect the unoccupied building of 'La Tuilerie' as quarters for them. It's the old stable of the hunting establishment of the Marquises Lancry de Pronleroy. The house is on the edge of the woods outside the park.

Letter from Abbé Lépine telling of his return; it seems that the Oise has become a military zone; before giving the abbé leave to enter it, they asked him for proof of identity. He produced the famous special passport given him by the Marquis de Talhouet and signed by Émile Ollivier in 1870. He has met the Duchesse de Vendôme; she is never weary of talking about the prodigious deeds of the Belgian resistance; she seems very hopeful.

August 15

Feast of the Assumption

The curé announces at Mass that there will be no procession this afternoon for fear of turmoil or scandal, considering the wretchedness of the times. This announcement was greeted with murmurs of disapproval.

Reading from the pulpit of the pastoral letter of the Bishop of Beauvais on the war. The document says in every line that war is a scourge, and presents a picture of modern battles designed to make the bravest tremble. All the pains we have taken to keep up the morale of the people thrown away!

The mayor sends me word that the refugees from Verdun will arrive at two o'clock, with supplies for one day.

Our breakfast served, between torrents of rain we go to La Tuilerie; our guests are sprawling pell-mell on the wet grass, with the most heterogeneous packages tossed in piles. The men are wild-looking and worn out, the women haggard, speechless, and tearless; we can get nothing but a few moans out of them.

'We've been hunted like wild beasts; we've been loaded in carts, or on horses, without food, and pushed on for three days.'

The curé arrives, and with a piteous air — for he will always be defeatist in feelings — says a few encouraging words. My daughter induces the women to come into the house, to do some of the housework, to warm the food. We promise them linen and kitchen utensils.

August 16

Bad news — very vague — begins to get about, although the newspapers say nothing of it. We are falling back in Alsace; Mulhouse has been evacuated; the Belgians are giving way everywhere. There is some talk of two Zeppelins destroyed, one by Garros, who is said to have been killed when he struck the hostile dirigible.

The refugees at La Tuilerie haven't enough beds; I am sending them three, with sheets and coverlets and a great basket of vegetables.

In the afternoon we go to see the poor creatures. They were not driven away by the army. The suburbs had all

been evacuated suddenly because of the firing from the forts; the order was issued at five o'clock; at five-thirty they were all on their way. All the cattle have been requisitioned; they were not able to take away a fowl or a rabbit, or any provisions; the carts, harnessed, unharnessed, put back again to let the military trains pass, have gone in various directions. One wagon-load of women and children, having started by a blunder toward the west, ought to reach Saint-Just to-night.

August 17

My daughters are working at their foot-warmers. The sound of a carriage and voices in the courtyard sends us in a rush to the studio window. It is Abbé Lépine, lively as a cricket, delighted with his expedition. He greets us most affectionately. We are a bit excited at meeting again — curious, too, to know what is being said at Paris.

‘Why, haven’t you received the letter I sent you Friday?’

‘It will come along without undue haste, two or three days after it’s been opened to see if it doesn’t disclose any secrets of the National Defense.’

The abbé asks for a cup of tea and biscuits. My daughters run to the kitchen and take his tea, boiling hot, to his bedroom.

The abbé left Neuilly this morning at six o'clock; he exhibited the famous passport of 1870, signed by Émile Ollivier, which completely befuddled the gendarme posted at the ticket-window, who confined himself to observing that he was not acquainted with that member of the Government. Later, he assures the abbé that they will find a place for him on a civilian train starting at two o'clock. He has luncheon at Bouillon-Duval, then gets into a railway carriage, with some ladies going to see their husbands in the East. The passport in question, you see, demands special attention for the bearer. He looks up the station-agent at

Saint-Just; as the communication with La Neuville is broken, he applies to the drayman's wife, Madame Théron, who is just starting with her children in a wagon for Beauvais, where her husband is mobilized. She agrees to turn back in order to set down this distinguished traveler at Pronleroy.

We hurl questions at the abbé frantically.

'But, after all, we're victorious in Alsace, aren't we?'

'The *communiqués* said so... Paris doesn't take much stock in the *communiqués*. They can't dodge the facts of the evacuation of Mulhouse, the repulse of the cavalry in the Ardennes.... But they're keeping many things under cover in Belgium; that is why so many people are afraid and are leaving Paris; this morning Thérèse stood in line two hours to get my ticket for Saint-Just.'

The Duchesse de Vendôme has returned to Neuilly from a hurried journey to England. They say she has been at Sandringham to implore the British royal family to hurry the sending over of British troops to help Belgium and the North of France. Her palace at Neuilly has been taken over for a hospital, and the first wounded are arriving.

The abbé tells of the horrors of the invasion of Belgium, of the burning of Louvain, and the massacre of the hostages.

The taking of unfortified Mulhouse doesn't seem to have had any great effect. General French's arrival in Paris was the great news yesterday. The Parisians pass their time waiting for the newspapers: at getting-up time, *Le Matin*, then *Le Paris-Midi*; at three o'clock, *La Patrie*; at four, *La Liberté*; at six, *L'Intransigeant*.

The enthusiasm at the departure of the troops is indescribable; civilians line the route with flowers, flags, sweetmeats, and tobacco. A soldier takes a flag from a small boy and sticks it in his rifle-barrel. 'Don't cry, my boy; I'll bring you a finer one from Berlin!'

On Boulevard Mortier the soldiers can find nothing to eat during a halt. Some woman beats up a gigantic omelet,

and brings bread with it; all the housewives make coffee, and they distribute seventy litres among the men's canteens.

At Jouy-en-Josas, eighty trains a day pass. A group of women take turns in distributing food and cigarettes.

But we have to break off our reading of the newspapers, in order to look after the abbé's dinner, for he is a real epicure.

August 18

Fighting in Belgium! Our curé, who has letters and newspapers from Brussels,¹ is greatly disturbed. He says the Prince de Ligne has been killed at Bel-Œil. The newspaper corrects the mistake next day; says it was a Prince de Lippe; but our Abbé Lépine was prostrated, for he has been tutor to all the aristocracy, and has had charge of the education of two Princes de Ligne of Bel-Œil.

News at last from our relatives in La Vendée. My cousin, Françoise de Chabot, is setting up a hospital near the château at Châtillon-sur-Sèvres. The Gérards de Chabot, who were staying at Vauvenargues, near Aix, took three days to cross France, their train being repeatedly thrown on the sidings to let the military trains pass. And yet Gérard has found the quickest way of being reestablished as mayor of Saint-Aubin, by returning to his commune. Paul and his son Philip are in the department of the Seine-et-Oise, being in charge of the very extensive hospital of Brétigny-sur-Orge.

August 19

Impossible to obtain fresh butter at Pronleroy; that seems a catastrophe to our abbé; he is never tired of talking about the excellent arrangements for distributing food in Paris. They let six persons at once into the grocery shops, guarded by troops; every one receives a rationed quantity of goods; but people get round the difficulty by going to several shops in far-away districts.

¹ The curé of Pronleroy was a Belgian priest from the Abbey of Maredson.

It was said yesterday morning at Paris that fierce fighting is going on in Alsace.

The abbé gets very impatient because the newspapers do not arrive; the postman's hour has passed and we shall have nothing to-day. The abbé forgets his impatience in telling us stories; for instance, the remark of Mirman, prefect of Meurthe-et-Moselle, on visiting the hospital at Lunéville; he stops by the beds and says to the soldiers: 'Even if you are wounded, France herself is in good shape, and that's all that counts.'

And then there's the odyssey of a French lady — Madame de France de Tersant — who was at her country house on the banks of the Rhine in July, with a young child. She was packed on a train of civilians, with all the shades down and fastened; but that could not prevent their hearing the shouts and Tyrolean songs of the soldiers at Innsbruck. On July 31, she was arrested at Metz and her luggage confiscated; she escaped with her child through a small door in the railway station, hired a carriage, and drove to Novéant; then she crossed the frontier to the first French village, through the woods, leading her child by the hand. At Pagny-sur-Moselle, a peasant gave her a little cart to carry the child, who could no longer walk. A squad of French cavalry picked them up on the road, and the officer put them in an army motor which took them to Nancy.

It seems that the following memoranda have been found on wounded Germans taken in Belgium: Haclen (North-west Liège); Eghézée (North Namur); Gret Betz (West Brussels), and Louvain — the goals to be reached the third day of the campaign. On other wounded, documents arranging to meet at Nancy on the second day, at Verdun the fourth, Reims the thirteenth, and a notation, in another hand: '*Das nichts*, this is no longer a war of peoples, but a war of officers.'

Deserters from Alsace have spread the news of the lack

of food among the Germans; rations for men, a bit of sausage, two spoonfuls of peas, no bread, and for drink, swamp water.

August 20

After luncheon Simone and I hang shades in my bedroom while the abbé takes his nap. My two young daughters, with Reine, are washing cotton dresses at the kitchen door.

‘I beg pardon, mesdemoiselles ——’

It is the mayor, embarrassed to see my daughters with their arms in the soapsuds. He has come to ask me something. I take him to the large salon the door of which we unfasten with difficulty.

‘That dull sound — is it the guns, Monsieur le Maire?’

‘Yes, but very far away; the wind brings it. The sub-prefect at Clermont just telephoned to ask if the château would take in a few convalescents from the district hospital; in case you consent, you must go and make arrangements with him as soon as possible.’

My two eldest rush off to M. Thomas’s to hire a horse; he has one to lend us day after to-morrow.

August 21

As Arthémise seems to grow stranger and stranger, we go to see her mother-in-law, a most excellent woman, who owns a small inn at Cernoy.

‘I must take her back,’ she says. ‘When her husband isn’t here, I don’t know what to do with her; her head isn’t just right, and she’ll do nothing but cause you trouble.’

So here we are without a cook!

I receive a bill from the tax-collector: four hundred and sixty-five francs to pay. I can’t take this sum from the few hundred francs which I can still call my own. So we decide to go for advice to my notary at Lieuvillers. We start after lunch with my daughters, whom the expedition amuses.

The harvest is in; the ricks stand up like enormous mill-wheels on the smooth ground. Three heavy carts are laden with grain; farther away, the motionless silhouettes of four white oxen hitched to two of these same high carts. We hear still the occasional clatter of a mowing-machine, the guttural cries of the drivers. Then we see in the fields very old or very young workers assisting the women. Here, then, the peaceful task of gleaning is going on while men are killing one another on the frontier.

M. Thomas leaves his office to see what is going on in the street, recognizes us, and shows us a short cut through an alley.

M. Siou, my notary, will pay the collector two hundred francs; the 'moratorium' makes it unnecessary for us to pay anything, so this will pass as a sort of voluntary patriotic payment. M. Siou has heard from his only mobilized son; on the 7th he was at Dun-sur-Meuse and was very well.

August 22

I start with my two big girls for Clermont; the heavy atmosphere of gloom in the town depresses us. We leave our modest trap at the station in the care of Bouchez, and go on to the sub-prefecture. We find the office closed; the sub-prefect is at the station. Perhaps later we shall be able to speak to him. We see a train come in filled with officers of all grades; they look dejected and gesticulate and talk a good deal. Another train passes, filled with supplies, horses, and men who still have faded bouquets in their rifle-barrels and the muzzles of the cannon... leafless wreaths at the car doors. Most of the men are mixed up with the artillery on the platforms. Those fellows know what war is; no singing now, no enthusiasm; but on certain faces stern and desperate resolution. These troops are returning from the East, falling back to the more seriously threatened North.

A group of civilians, with armlets, pass wine and shout at the top of their voices: 'Vive la France! Vive l'Armée!'

They point out the sub-prefect, who is shaking hands, trying to revive enthusiasm. A gold-laced person assures us that we can't speak to the sub-prefect; that he'll be at his office in the evening; we must go there to see him.

We go in search of the employment office to look for a cook, and find a sort of shop in which the agent has a desk. No, there's no one to be had at the moment.

I go to the bank to see what can be done to obtain some money. A very embarrassed second-class official tells me that the Crédit branch is no longer in operation; perhaps the Crédit Foncier — the best way would be to get an advance from my notary — the war will be so short!

I take my daughters for lunch to the pastry-cook's to comfort them for these set-backs; there we are greeted by the sub-prefect's wife with an assumed optimism. Her husband will return very soon; he knows Pronleroy, has often been there to hunt, and knows of my purchase of the château.

The sub-prefect comes in, full of business, very important, care-worn. But he will not say anything either. At the moment there are no wounded at Clermont. Yes, he had telephoned to several mayors, but that was two or three days ago; arrangements are changed from one moment to another. I must always have some rooms in readiness; the hospital allowance is two to three francs a day; in case of wounded men, if any turn up, the régime to be followed will be sent to me. I can retain the use of my telephone, and I shall have a Red Cross flag on the roof. 'A safeguard in case of emergency — but everything is going well!' he adds hurriedly.

We go to the station to look for newspapers for the abbé; they tell us of the death of Pius X.

Units of German cavalry have ridden into our territory toward Roubaix-Tourcoing.

We watch a train pass filled with young recruits; they are just from Paris, flag-bedecked, covered with flowers; the soldiers have new gaudy uniforms, faded roses behind their ears, little flags in their rifle-barrels; they sing the 'Marseillaise' as well as they can; they are piled upon the platforms, the seats of the ambulances, and the caissons of the guns.

Sunday, August 23

The Duc d'Orléans has returned to the Emperor of Austria the necklace of the Golden Fleece, explaining, in a superb letter, that he doesn't want anything that came from the aggressors of 1914. So our princes are on the alert for anything that will prove their love for the country that has banished them!

At Mass, Simone walks at the head of the line of young girls who march in procession to the church; that is what is called '*reprendre le bâton*,' a local custom in Picardy, which consists in carrying in both hands at the head of the procession a heavy carved and gilded staff of the time of Louis XV. These festivities are in honor of a small statue of the Virgin of the eighteenth century.

Met the refugees from Verdun; they had been drinking and were staggering and howling, with enthusiasm, patriotic tunes.

Went with the abbé to M. Tonnelier's to read the news. The Germans are occupying Brussels; the Belgian army is retiring on Antwerp, which is said to be impregnable; the Government is falling back, too. The German cavalry has reached Wavre. The *communiqué* says that we have made a victorious entry into Mulhouse; there has been never a word of our retirement.

The abbé is disturbed: how is it that, if this is so, we hear the guns? It must be that they're concealing many things;

the mayor won't tell anything. Madame Tonnelier weeps. The abbé goes to Dupérour's to arrange for his departure to-morrow.

August 24

A letter from the Chabots urging me — in view of the danger that threatens the departments of the North — to come and stay with them in La Vendée, at the château of Le Boissière, as long as the war lasts. The abbé urges me to accept this invitation; my daughters and I reject it with disdain. If there is danger, this isn't the time for people who live in châteaux to abandon their homes.

Most tearful farewells from the abbé.

My daughters trim their hats with black and remove the Scotch plaid collars from their gray tailored suits, as mourning for the Pope.

M. Tonnelier tells us that the cattle of the department of the Oise are requisitioned for the army; we shall eat only sheep after this.

Packages of delayed newspapers. We read the fine address of the Tsar to the Poles. My daughters are fresh from their historical studies and cannot contain themselves for joy. The press is full of nothing but the resurrection of Poland; the second victorious entry into Mulhouse has almost passed from sight. The newspaper, the *Marne et Loire*, tells us of all the prophecies and omens: The oak of Jena felled by lightning; the statue of Germania at Constance fallen down; the crown of the Kings of Poland found at Cracow in a hiding-place, revealed by the fall of a centenarian linden; the arms and sword of Bismarck buried at Rüthen.

August 25

The postman arrives, mournful. It is the last delivery. The mails are transferred to Beauvais; the tax-collector

has gone, the sub-prefect at Clermont is going — and so many things that one can't tell — 'Wouldn't it be better for you to go away, Madame la Marquise?'

Madame Thomas sends word to me that she is going to-day to Saint-Just, and offers to take my daughters and me in her carriage; we shall go to her kinswoman's, Madame Pion, who has charge of the hospital.

On the road we pass the first motors filled with refugees, half-dressed, with bundles of clothing and kitchen utensils just tossed into the car. These panic-stricken Belgians seem like madmen. We watch from the railway bridge the trains of locomotives pass, whistling in a doleful way, without stopping. In three days one hundred and eighty of these trains have passed, some with twenty or thirty locomotives; they are taking off all the rolling stock of the Belgian railways.

We meet soldiers on cycles and drivers of motors wearing the armlet of the Red Cross. This is the first real impression that the war is advancing upon us. I can understand better the abbé's haste to be gone; but how did he get along on his journey?

Madame Pion also believes that news is being kept back — news of serious disasters; she urges me to see M. Batticle, who is going to show me the hospital at the station. The nurses have arrived; they will tell me all there is to tell about such convalescents as I can have at Pronleroy.

At M. Batticle's they tell me that the mayor is at the station looking after the dressing of the wounds of three soldiers. A civilian with a blue armlet, who is bustling about, takes us to M. Batticle, who is very amiable and telephones to the chief nurse at the hospital to receive us.

We are much excited to see soldiers pass, all black with smoke and powder, who seem completely exhausted. I call out to them: 'Where are you from?'

'From Mulhouse. Ah! damnation! we started for Lille, we're starving to death — nothing to put in our stomachs — and what a thirst!'

No one to give anything whatever to the poor devils. I scatter a few small coins in the helmets they hold out; the restaurant-keeper arrives, his arms loaded with bottles of beer. I make a sign to him...arms are stretched out and grab the bottles. The train starts. Officers from the next carriage call out to me: 'Thanks, madame, for our men.'

At the old Say sugar factory, the manager, M. Dumont, shows us over the improvised hospital — bandages, bathrooms, operating-rooms. The flag of the Red Cross floats over the flower-girt buildings.

The nurses, in blouses without sleeves, cut bandages, and when idle are very glad of the windfall of a visit. They take my daughters in charge and show them everything. The head nurse gives me a printed ration for convalescents: one hundred and fifty grammes of meat at a meal, or two eggs; soup at every meal, many vegetables, cooked fruits, and a bottle of wine for each four men.

On leaving, I go to Madame Canot's to order a small cask of red wine. Her business is much demoralized. 'You will have to send for it, madame; just now I can't deliver anything at a distance.'

More military trains are signaled, and my daughters go to a baker, who cuts loaves of bread into slices for them; then they stock themselves with cigarettes and chocolate; their little stock of money vanishes. And when we set out to carry these treasures to the soldiers, we are confronted with an order: 'No passing here.'

But a workman beckons to us, and we climb over some freight trucks.

'Hello! here are some ladies at work making bread!' cry the soldiers.

We don't have to distribute anything; in a twinkling we are surrounded by the great fellows, who jump from the cars, seize the bread, beg for 'just a bit more chocolate, mademoiselle.' Civilians, carried away by our example, arrive with bottles and supplies.

The train has already started, the non-coms swear, the officers thank us. Helmets are waved from the doors, the 'Marseillaise' rings out frantically. How little it needs of anything to put courage in the heart of a French soldier!

Madame Thomas has come to look for us, being in a great hurry to start before night with its swarms of motors flying from the north.

No newspapers to be had in the two shops of Saint-Just. An obliging gentleman resells me the *Matin*, which he has already read. It tells of the formation of the Committee of National Defense: Millerand, Delcassé, and Gallieni, Governor of Paris.

August 26

Madame Tonnelier's granddaughter, Germaine Zahnn, comes to teach my daughters how to put a joint in the oven and cook it to a turn.

Children from the village rush by. We hear an extraordinary rumbling and a cloud of smoke, or dust, rises in the direction of Cressonsacq.

We must go and see what's up.

A soldier on a motor-cycle, all out of breath, stops.

'The road from Roye to Montdidier, if you please?'

I have no idea, but Madame Zahnn, who has come up, explains: 'By Lieuvillers, to the left, on the road to Saint-Just. But what's going on over toward Cressonsacq?'

'A battery of artillery — by George, it makes a fellow thirsty!'

I send at once for some casks of cider and my daughters hasten with full mugs.

The first mounted men appear at the turn in the road, and cry out: 'Is there something to drink?'

Curt orders from the officers: 'Don't break ranks! Don't halt!'

Thereupon my daughters and I go up to them filling the mugs which the mounted men take from their pouches; we step up on the steps of the caissons and the wheels of the guns, to fill the cups which they hold out to us amid the grinding of the brakes. Down from the church come Bouchez and Joséphine with mugs of cider. Madame Angèle, a little lower down, is also giving out cider and milk.

'Quick! Close ranks!' order the officers.

The horses snorted, as an officer's motor passed like a cannon ball.

'The little lady came near being crushed!'

Two arms had lifted me onto the caisson with my bottle. The motor had just grazed me.

'Do you fellows always go like that?' I inquire.

'Who can say, my dear lady? One day here, another there. We are stopping up holes. We seem to be victorious, and then —— It's no use to try to understand. Probably the head ones know.'

'All the same, there's a famous battle going on in the North,' said the other driver. 'The big guns are at work. Don't you know down here what is going on?'

'No, the post doesn't come every day.'

'See, here's a paper I bought at the station at Creil.'

Several soldiers take out their purses: 'How much do we owe you, little ladies?'

A comrade nudges them: 'Don't you see — this is the lady of the château here.'

Madame Angèle arrives and speaks to the soldiers.

'But you're going to stop them! You're not going to let the Prussians come among us? Is this war our business? — In that case, the army — what is that for?'

'We'll do what we can. Don't be afraid.'

'Courage, comrades.'

And what smiles, what oglings and jests with pretty Madame Zahnn, with her eyes like a startled doe's.

August 27

A tap on my door very early. It is Simone.

'Mamma, Madame Fontaine told me to tell you that a regiment arrived at the farm to-night; they're asleep in the barn; they're going right away, but they have nothing but bread for their rations. Madame Angèle made them coffee, and wants to know if you can send them anything.'

A merry party of cavalrymen in the farmyard as we arrive with jars of sweetmeats, baskets of fruit, and mugs of coffee.

The soldiers joke.

'Well, here's some reënforcements! These ladies go on foot, *lou la, lou laire*. The little girls are going to make some jelly-cakes.'

Men are shaving, three by three, in front of bits of broken looking-glass, on the window-sill.

'We must make ourselves handsome; we have lady visitors this morning.'

A non-commissioned officer with a plaster on his cheek greets us: 'Don't imagine a hero's wound, mesdames; it's only a boil; that's the devil of war!'

These fine fellows have no doubt of victory; they take Madame Angèle familiarly by the shoulders and turn her about.

'Why, yes, my little lady, we're going to stop them! Do you think Prussians are going to get by when we dragoons are here?'

'All the same, those infernal Boches have pushed farther on.'

'What would you have! This is war-time, and they send

us here. Oh! we advance and fall back. It's like the ink in the bottle. We're a small rifle-ball in a big crowd. But, if we please, when we please, the French army is in it, too. Père Joffre has his plans — sure enough — there's no doubt of that.'

Hasty departure of the squadron, prodded by the non-coms.

The cannon are roaring terribly and seem to be getting nearer. Bouchez, who has been to Saint-Just, saw on the road a hundred or more motors going at top speed; they were not Belgians this time, but Frenchmen flying from the departments in the North, where the panic is spreading.

I'm sorry now that I didn't send my girls to my aunt's in La Vendée. The dears throw their arms around my neck, affectionately.

'Mamma, we'll never leave you in times of danger!'

I think about placing them in a convent at Versailles, near enough to hear from them.

We go to the mayor's. Longwy has surrendered after a bombardment of twenty-four days. The English are falling back in the North.

There have appeared at Dupérroux's two decorated civilians; they are here for requisitions; they assure us that we need not be alarmed, but must have confidence in the General Staff; they contradict the false reports that people are paid to spread.

A package of mail reaches us by way of Beauvais; we don't know how.

My cousin, De Beireix, has gone with six nurses to the Montalembert Hospital at Limoges; they have no wounded yet.

There's a report that an airplane has been flying over Pronleroy; it's only a motor stationed here that makes a lot of noise.

This evening I go to Madame Angèle's. She has the

door of her dining-room unbarred to receive me; she was just coming to the château; she wanted to suggest that I take a place in her wagons if the military authorities require the village to be evacuated. She proposes to betake herself and her caravan to Normandy. I accept, and authorize her, if she cannot take all her flock, to leave the animals at liberty in my park, which is surrounded by walls.

We go to the mayor's office, to see the grandiloquent proclamation posted by the Ministry:

The new Government has taken possession of its post of honor and of combat. It gives itself, heart and soul, to the public defense; the country can rely upon it, etc.

August 28

Bouchez comes to tell me that troops are passing through Pronleroy, marching toward Estrées.

'Then they must be falling back in the North?'

'It seems so.'

We rush out to the road; officers are hustling the civilians, urging their men forward. A corporal calls to me: 'Don't get excited. These are strategic movements.'

We secure with bars the doors, which are not very tight, nail boards over the windows, which have neither shutters nor blinds; it's an illusory sort of security to feel that we are shut in tight, but it's something.

In the afternoon, from people going and coming from the neighboring villages, we learn that our troops are passing in a torrent.

We talk over, my daughters and I, the possibility of seeing the enemy. How our outlook has changed! Two or three weeks ago, the thought of seeing the Germans would have made us shiver; to-day we discuss coolly what we are to do. If we are in an invaded country, not to leave our house. What women in our position have to fear is falling in with bands of tipsy soldiers without officers. Germany is an

aristocratic country; if we appeal to officers, they will see that we are treated with respect. My daughters rehearse their scraps of German from their school exercises, and with the aid of a dictionary compose this sentence in which Goethe could find nothing to criticize:

We are ladies of the higher nobility; we wish to speak with your officer. You are on the estate of the Marquise de Foucault, of the same name as Colonel Louis de Foucault — military attaché at Berlin — who has always been treated by your Emperor with the highest consideration.

This document was made in several copies, in a large and very legible hand, and left in several places within reach, to be presented to the first Prussian who should cross our threshold. This precaution gave us a certain sense of security. My daughters placed on all the chimney-pieces pictures of Little Sister Theresa of the Child Jesus, so fertile in miracles. At heart we had hopes, despite everything, in some providential event which would save us from the invasion.

I conclude that it may be prudent to begin hiding all our valuables; the day is passed in dragging furniture about and concealing boxes in the numberless secret twists and turns of the château.

August 29

My daughters are awakened by the beating of drums, and run to the village, but we hear nothing more.

Madame Angèle leans out of her window and calls: 'That was to let the people know that they must carry all their weapons and ammunition to the mayor's office before ten o'clock.'

Madame Zahnn arrives. 'Grandfather wants you to send something to the mayor's office. You have nothing but parade weapons: send the worst of those and keep the rest.'

All about the country there are troops of disbanded

soldiers going in all directions, and dismounted artillery. On the roads a flood of refugees on foot. We certainly have suffered a great defeat somewhere — panic is upon us.

Simone and I take a ladder and begin to take down the arms hanging on the walls. The sheaves of swords in the dining-room are easy to take apart, but the trophies of sabers and armor are much heavier to move. The bell rings for Mass; we must hurry. Standing on the stove in the large salon, Simone pulls with all her strength at a scimitar; I see her losing her balance, try to save her, overturn my own ladder, and we fall together with an indescribable clatter, amid all the scattered weapons on which we might well have spitted ourselves. And all without being hurt! We get up, a little dizzy, and send pistols, hunting-knives, and Moroccan muskets to the mayor's office by Bouchez, who is to take his own hunting-rifle. We carry the other weapons to the attic and put them in the gutters with old boards and broken tiles to cover them.

We start for Mass — a very short service. We speak with Madame Thomas. Consternation reigns. They say the Prussians have entered the forest of Reine; that a general has let them pass by way of Lille. Treachery or incapacity? There's a battle on above us, not far away, toward Rossières in Santerre and Chaulnes. The enemy burns everything as he passes.

My daughters serve lunch, and eat with the appetite that goes with their age. My own throat is so choked that nothing will go down.

My girls busy themselves arranging pictures and books in their bedroom. Bouchez and I drag furniture into closets out of sight between the bedrooms, which make excellent hiding-places. Simone brings up the most valuable things from the large salon. Pictures and china, which it took so much time to arrange, are removed in a twinkling; the marble pedestals of the consoles seem like feathers. One

of the best hiding-places is a closet in Simone's bedroom, the door of which is perfectly hidden by a wardrobe; all the clocks are piled up there; it hasn't occurred to us to stop them, and they strike in turn with a noise like thunder, it seems to us. Never mind — the wardrobe is too hard to move!

We spy an airplane flying from Lieuvillers toward Compiègne; the heavy rumble peculiar to great guns comes up from the road. Young Thomas, returning on a bicycle from Saint-Just, says that troops are detraining at all the stations and marching southward. We are in the zone that is being abandoned!

'Ah! my poor children!' says Madame Angèle to my daughters, and bursts out sobbing, she who is usually so brave.

Madame Thomas has brought a newspaper from Saint-Just; nothing but vague statements of falling back, and the admission of one defeat — Charleroi. They are fortifying the entrenched camp about Paris.

At the end of the day, exhausted by having moved so much furniture and barricaded so many doors and windows, we sit in front of the château.

The sound of galloping horses makes us start. Madame Boulard calls to us: 'It's the Forty-Seventh of the Line passing at the end of the village.'

My daughters want to see, so we hurry. The regiment has already passed; we set out on the Saint-Just road; we go farther and farther, from one curve in the road to another, hoping always to see something; but they have gone.

Meeting M. Tonnelier, who is talking with M. Fontaine, we are no longer taken in by the assumed optimism of the mayor. An airplane returns from the north, flying very low; this is a Frenchman, the one this morning was a Boche.

Hereabout they say that the Prussians are at Montiers. On the main street we meet motors with canvas blinds

drawn and two soldiers on the driver's seat; they ask the way to La Neuville... ambulances for the wounded.

August 30

At half-past six Simone says that a regiment has halted for rest on the Cressonsacq road. We go out with what we have left of bread, bottles of wine, and fruit.

'See the ladies and the sweets!' cries a young soldier, laughing.

A non-commissioned officer draws us back.

'The signal to start is just about to be given,' he says; 'take all this to the commissary.'

Soldiers tease us to get hold of a piece of bread or a bottle.

'We shan't forget; this is the first place where any one has given us anything,' said a soldier to Denyse as she gave him a jar of preserve.

'Are you falling back, too?' I said sorrowfully.

'Nobody knows — so many counter-marches, always falling back. Sometimes, we hold; we believe we are winning; they tell us so, and in the morning we have to decamp without fighting. There's some of the big-wigs who are not on the job.'

A column of refugees, with bunches of cattle running through the fields, pass on the road to Clermont; the whole village goes to look at them.

At half-past three, they tell us they can hear bugles blowing; it's only motor-horns. We hear loud reports; it seems that that's the French army blowing up bridges behind it.

Something going on. We go out of the park. In front of Dupérroux's there are two dragoons, one with a bleeding wound in the face; he says that he was sent out to reconnoiter with others, and they were taken by surprise; they found shelter in the woods toward Roye. At night they tried firing their rifles and galloped straight ahead. They

belong to the Fifth Dragoons from Compiègne and want to know if we have seen their regiment pass. Several of the Fifth Dragoons passed through Pronleroy at one o'clock, going toward Estrées. I ask if there are still fugitives on the road.

'All La Neuville is leaving!'

'Ought we to go?' I ask.

They don't dare to give their opinion; on both sides of the road above Ressons, everything is in flames.

'Then we will go and hide in the woods.'

'Oh! that's the very best way to get yourself shot. Stay at home, my poor ladies; that's the safest way.'

We go to see the mayor, who is very calm, with a fine swagger; he tells us to give no weight to the words of disbanded soldiers. But he is no more willing to give advice. His wife and granddaughter are going to stay. What a time to take a journey — the railroad stations are all ready to be blown up.

Bouchez, who started out with his donkey-cart to fetch a case of wine from Saint-Just, was held up by the troops; he is late in returning and his wife imagines him already a prisoner.

M. Tonnelier assures us that if there is a battle, the army will evacuate the population.

'But at the château we are so far away; we shall not hear — they'll forget us.'

Madame Tonnelier invites us to sleep at her house; the mayor will be the first to be notified of what is going on.

'Last night was ghastly; there'll be many when we shan't be so frightened.'

'Do accept, mamma,' beg my daughters.

'All right, Madame Tonnelier.'

We go back to the château to dinner, and to get money and jewels and such things as can be carried in a handbag. We carry a little linen, a heavy cloak over our arms. We

lock the doors behind us with a sinking at the heart of which we say nothing to each other.

At the end of the driveway, we meet Bouchez, who has started again on his bicycle and tried to meet some troops on the road to Lestrées and find out whether the danger is for to-night. Everything seems tranquil. In beautiful moonlight we arrive at the Tonneliers'; they are picking beans under the bay window of the dining-room; we offer to help them, but they think that it would derogate too much from our dignity, and we have to watch them, with folded arms. M. Tonnelier, keenly on the alert, goes to take a turn on the road. Everything is quiet, we must try to sleep; we wish each other a tearful good-night and at half-past nine we retire to our rooms. I am on the ground floor, in the Lepages' fine apartment; my daughters in the two gables at the top.

The beds are made in the old style, with so many mattresses and feather beds that I have to climb on a chair to reach the top. Upstairs the children move about and dispute a little. Fatigue puts us all to sleep.

I am awakened by a bright light. There are no blinds at the windows; I think that the village must be burning and jump out of bed half asleep; it is only magnificent moonlight.

Monday, August 31

Awakened about six o'clock by a tremendous cannonade, which lasts until eight.

Madame Zahnn brings me some excellent *café-au-lait* in my bedroom, and says: 'Grandfather is making a hiding-place for our money and papers; would you like to put your jewels in it, Madame la Marquise? If it should be done at once, nobody would know anything about it.'

I accept, and place in a steel box all that it will hold of jewels; we wrap the box in tarred paper and I go back to Madame Tonnelier. She has already dug a great hole in the

poultry-yard; there are packages in it and my box goes to join them. The stones are relaid in the clay and chicken dung spread over all.

We start for the château to arrange our toilet a bit, and return to our rooms, which we left yesterday, amazed to find them undisturbed. My daughters go back to help Madame Zahnn make our beds; that young woman tells them what a how-d'ye-do there has been in the house to have us received like princesses: the finest linen taken out of the chests, and Madame Tonnelier fussing about.

'Germaine, if you leave any folds in Madame la Marquise's sheets, you'll have to make the bed again.'

All this is really very touching.

Little Reine started this morning for Nanteuil, with some refugees who were going to the fête there.

After luncheon, cooked after a fashion by Joséphine, we go to see a party of people evacuated from the Somme, who arrived last night and are quartered in my barns. A strange group of emaciated factory girls, fifteen or sixteen years old, all with a little one at the breast, and old men.¹ These people seem terror-stricken.

I ask: 'What can we do for you?'

'Eat — something hot to eat.'

We have only half a loaf; the baker has gone away; it's impossible to buy bread. I discover in a box some crusts and bits of toast; with these I show them how to make a stew very thick with vegetables, and a big dish of potatoes. The poor wretches threw themselves on the food and gave milk to the babies. When they felt a little better, they told me that they would like to pay for their food with work, asking to be employed at anything whatever so that they might think less of the cannon, which roar all the time and frighten them.

¹ Later I learned that one of these old men was father-in-law of Durandau, the young upholsterer who went away on the day of mobilization.

The women came to our kitchen to wash our dishes, and sweep the stairways; the men go out to hoe in the kitchen garden, to pull out the weeds from the black-currant bushes. At night I sent them blankets, for although the days are hot, the nights are getting cool.

We have taken chairs to the foot of the staircase, and from there we can overlook the front door.

At three o'clock the roar of the cannon becomes terrifying; at four, we leave our tea, climb up to the attic, place a ladder against the wall, and put our heads through a window.

'They can't even let us finish eating,' grumbles Denyse, who has brought her cake with her.

We can see nothing, get no smell of powder; the reports come from one side of the Trois-Étots; they must be fighting on the road to Clermont, behind our woods.

Marguerite, Joséphine's sister, comes from Cressonsacq with her three girls, her cows, her horses, her hens; she ties the cows to the fence on the lawn. All this makes a hubbub about the château, running hither and thither — a sort of life which encourages us, so much a question of nerves is fear.

We send word to the Tonneliers that we are going to sleep at the château. They have no news of the battle that is going on about us.

During dinner, there is a noise like hail; the sky is perfectly clear, so it must be the patter of bullets and machine guns.

September 1

At six o'clock Joséphine rushes into my daughters' bedroom, for the noise of the guns seems close at hand. Simone goes up to the attic to see what she can see, but there is nothing; then she goes to comfort the Guislains; having very few clothes on, she takes a heavy cold and begins to sneeze.

My two younger daughters go to Mass; a strange-sounding motor-horn, and a car passes through the village like a flash; later we learn that it was filled with German officers.

Suddenly the firing dies down — only a shot or two now and then.

At ten o'clock I go with Simone to the Tonneliers'; they have just learned that Laleau's inn and the French Bank of La Neuville have had their doors blown in and are completely cleaned out.

Laure, a working-woman from Fontaine, comes rushing up all out of breath.

'Here's a new one! Over yonder by the Fief, there are three very polite Englishmen; they asked the way to La Neuville and touched their hats and said: "Thank you."'

'How were they dressed, these Englishmen?' asked the mayor.

'In dirty gray, with pointed caps.'

The mayor winks at us, shrugs his shoulders, and purses his lips.

Lory and his servant come up.

'We noticed an English patrol on the road to Noroy. There were fifteen men and an officer. They gave us a military salute with their hands to their hats and asked the way to Lieuvillers; we showed it to them, and then they opened a map and pointed with their fingers, first to La Neuville, then to Pronleroy, said "Thank you," and started by the cross-road to Lieuvillers.'

It is impossible to find out anything: no more mail, telephone and telegraph wires cut. The bridge at Compiègne is blown up; the poles and wires prevent the movement of the trains. The mayor has no longer any way of receiving orders from the Government. The bureaucracy has put an end to all initiative; things are done in the old way; no one dares to start anything new.

Bouchez has heard somebody say that French troops were still passing through La Neuville.

Several men from the village have decided to go the rounds of the place to keep an eye on who comes and goes. Bouchez wants to join them. He urges us not to go out of the park after nightfall. Not to hear the roar of the battle is restful to us and gives us a sense of security. We shall not be in the path of these savage hordes, drunk with alcohol mixed with ether, which drives the shock troops mad.

Entry for the day: We have been much less afraid than we expected.

Bouchez returns from a night round; everything is quiet to-night, and we must make the most of it, to sleep.

September 2

We know now that the German army occupies the whole country as far as Chantilly. At Madame Angèle's we hear about the horrors of Senlis. The sub-prefecture and all the houses on the main street of Amiens burned by lighted torches; the murder of the mayor, M. Odent, and hostages.

In the village, all sorts of tittle-tattle: They say that a farmer of Pronleroy pointed out the positions to which our troops have fallen back, and when they laughed at him, that he gave the numbers of the army corps and of the regiments.

It seems that the notary of La Neuville had left, in a suit of armor and a Prussian helmet, a trophy of 1870; this has led to a systematic pillage of his house, the chests opened, their contents broken, and whole beds thrown out of the windows, smashing the glass veranda.

At one place the women had hidden their bedclothes in the cellar, under piles of straw, and the Boches had the pleasant idea of opening all the spigots of the casks of cider which they did not care to drink, being very ugly because they found no wine.

In the houses they have been particularly careful to take whatever could be eaten, and have defiled whatever they left, thrown stable manure on the beds, soaked the chairs with cider or urine, etc.

The Germans have caught fugitives on the road and forced them to open the two bakeries and bake bread for them night and day for sixty hours.

A druggist of Paris, M. X——, who had a country house with his family at La Neuville, fled in the crowd of wild men who were hurrying toward Estrées. They were overtaken by a Boche patrol. Being questioned, the druggist was about to take from the inside pocket of his coat his certificate of identity; but the German thought that he was drawing a revolver, and shot him down like a dog; also his wife and children.

Thursday, September 3

At half-past ten I went to waken Suzanne, being uneasy because I had not heard her move. She had not slept at all, and had passed her sleepless hours in putting our journal in order.

I start with Simone for the Tonneliers' to borrow some alcohol to burn — a very scarce substance of which they have succeeded in securing a small quantity.

Going out through the small door of the church to the road to Cressonsacq, we are surprised to hear the regular tread of a mounted troop. By the church, twenty steps from us, a group of horsemen come forward with an officer at the head — Germans!

They are dragoons, dressed in greenish gray, with the pointed leather helmet. They look to right and left, and seem greatly surprised to find themselves in an inhabited village. Near Dupérour's is a small group of horsemen; an officer, leaning over his horse's neck, is talking with M. Tonnelier, very swaggering, punctuating his remarks with vehement gestures.

I press Simone's arm and say to her, 'Let's go through the front door. It's not worth while to call the Boches' attention to the small gate of the park which is hidden by the corner of the wall.'

The road, called 'the road of the honey bees,' seems very long. Suzanne and Denyse rush to meet us.

'Is that the noise of horses...?'

'Yes, it's *They!*'

As we go in, I say to Joséphine: 'Let no one go out of the château; do not leave any door or window open through which a German might get in by surprise.'

'Great God, is it possible! *They* are here!'

'They are here, my poor Joséphine!'

'And what do they look like, mamma?'

'Except for their bewildered air, they are like other men; they all have the filth, the brutal look of the worn-out soldier, but they are in no wise the savage horsemen of the Invasion of the Huns.'

Hearing a carriage on the road, we go up to our observatory in the attic. Behind a squad of soldiers is a line of great covered wagons, driven by French street-arabs and old men; the cavalymen gallop hither and yon on the sides of the road; it is a commissary's convoy — provisions, forage, grain.

The noise dies away, the last enemy disappears; we take advantage of this period of calm to go down to the dining-room. There is a little cold roast meat left and some preserve; we will have some tea; we haven't a cook's courage for a real meal. Just as we put the first mouthful to our lips, there comes a ringing 'Ver da?' with whistles.

My daughters resume their meal. Suzanne is working at a German dictionary, repeating sentences, to get it clearly into the heads of these Prussians, if they cross our thresholds, that we are persons of importance whom it would not be well to molest. Suzanne has placed in full sight on the

mantelpiece this placard: *'We are ladies of the higher nobility.'*

At one o'clock, a third convoy — a revictualing one, and of such length! After that a period of respite; we go as far as the gate of the park, having decided to seek news from the Tonneliers if anything is happening — a fourth convoy! Simone has seen a dragoon riding a very tall white horse, an enormous red-faced man, a genuine barbarian this time. To Suzanne he seemed tired and dirty like the others, but she is sure that he cast a very wicked eye upon her as he passed.

In front of Madame Angèle's, the servants on the farm are drawn up in line watching the passage of the troops. At the door of the Dupérourxs' are numerous groups of women, young girls, mostly Flemish, joking and laughing with the German soldiers. We close the door, hot with indignation. We are beginning to be less afraid. These cavalrymen pass without trying to make their way into the houses. Marguerite, who has just returned from the village, tells us that the Germans pay for whatever they take at Dupérourx's.

Denyse, whom we have locked up in her bedroom, becomes more and more restless.

'My sisters have seen the Prussians near to, but I shall not have seen anything. What am I going to say to my schoolmates? They will laugh at me — to have the enemy here under my nose and not be able to look at him — that's too hard!'

We go up once more to the attic and go out on the roof through the window.

'You can see them very well, Denyse; they are on the road outside the wall of the park.'

'No, I am not near enough,' she repeats, with a nervous, tearful insistence.

'Well, I will take you out to look at them through the park gate, if you will be quiet.'

Rather ill at ease, I take her by the hand, and we cross the lawn to another gate of the park, made of boards rather widely spaced, but luckily strengthened by horizontal timbers. Denyse glues her eye to the space between the boards. The Germans are halting, and are seated on the grass, eating; we can hear their guttural cries and the clinking of their weapons. To a group of women who are talking to them, one of the soldiers, leaning against the gate, replies: 'Day after to-morrow, three o'clock, Paris. France *kapout!*'

Denyse returns, well content 'to have seen, near at hand, those horrid soldiers in helmets.'

We do not disabuse her: they must be cap-protectors a little different from ours.

Fifth convoy — this one halts forever. These Germans act as if they were at home; orders are constantly exchanged in their horses' language. They are uncivilized creatures who speak a barbarous tongue not suited to our country and which causes us the exasperation and humiliation of feeling that we are subject to the orders of an enemy.

The evening of this long day arrives at last; we no longer hear or see anything. We sit on the terrace bench which overlooks the placid, deserted country.

Madame Zahnn joins us, anxious to know how this 'day of invasion' has passed for us, and very eager to tell us all that she knows.

The first convoys paid for all they took; the last stole all that was left at the Dupérourx shop. Being unable to understand what the Boches asked him, M. Tonnelier sent for Madame de Pau, who speaks German, and she stayed all day at the shop, bargaining with the officers and acting as interpreter.

The soldiers, afraid of poison, refused all food that had been touched — sausage, pie, roast meat cut in slices. They said that at Pronleroy there were decent people because

they hadn't hidden away and had come out to see them pass. All the girls were on the road to see how a Boche soldier was made. They laughed and joked. The worst of all was that idiot of a rural guard who shook hands with the Prussians, saying, 'Don't be afraid!'—to those people who were marching upon Paris!

With Joséphine, who also had gone out to look, it was another tune: some soldiers are discouraged and say: 'We are misled by our officers; they promised us we should be in Paris on the 15th of August, and here it is the 3d of September and we are not there yet! They are leading us to the slaughter-house.'

We went out with Madame Zahnn to Madame Angèle's. We find there Mesdemoiselles Thomas; every one tells what he has seen.

At the Fontaine farm several soldiers came in. They sent out for a Belgian day laborer to act as interpreter; the Germans asked for fifty eggs, and water to drink, which they compelled Madame Angèle to taste before them; a soldier took her by the shoulders and shook her saying: '*Français, kapout!* We, conquerors at Paris!'

At the tobacco-shop the Boches took all the cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and chocolate, except what Madame Boulard had time to hide in the back shop.

At the Thomases' the German officers requisitioned horses. As it was noon, they seated themselves at the proprietor's table, while the non-commissioned officers and soldiers took their places at the table of the workmen; on this latter table there was an immense meat pie; the men took it by the handfuls and ate it without bread, as if it were genuine delicatessen.

An officer asked for a vehicle with rubber-tired wheels and springs to carry a wounded officer; they went from door to door in quest of such a carriage. No one said there was a victoria at the château. Providentially the enemy arrived

in the village at the lower end at a point from which the château cannot be seen.

Everybody compliments the self-possession of the mayor. As soon as the Germans were spied, he betook himself with his staff to the mayor's office in order to be the first to speak to them. He said: 'I give you my word that no one will fire on you; I have requisitioned and had brought here to the mayor's office all weapons and ammunition. I wish to have no disorder in my commune; ask for what you need and I will have it brought to you for cash or on requisition.'

The officer replied: 'You are the first mayor that I have found at his post, except a M. de Villeneuve at a château a little farther up. You can rely upon it that there will be no looting.'

The mayor sent for the rural guard with his badge to represent the public authority; but as that idiot was fraternizing with the Germans, he was obliged to send him away.

We recognized several of the young people from Angivilliers and Lieuvillers, leading the horses requisitioned by the convoys; at Pronleroy all the children had been hidden by their parents. At the Thomases', Belgian workmen started off with the horses; when shall we see either again?

Friday, September 4

My daughters want to go to Mass at six o'clock. I send them with Bouchez as escort; he went out first to inspect the road and saw nothing disturbing; he will go again in case of alarm and wait at the door of the church.

Marguerite Guislain has returned; she went away yesterday with her children to gather her harvest of oats. At sight of the Germans she lost her head, left her loaded cart in the fields, and, dragging behind her horse and children, she went for shelter to her house, the keys of which she had left with a neighbor; she found her door broken in, her house robbed, and a squad of Boche dragoons in her court-

yard. The men asked her for sticks so that they could pull down plums, which they shared with her children. She started again for Cressonsacq, to see what had happened to her load of oats. Her horse had been taken.

Madame Thomas makes a neighborly call, still thinking of nothing but the experience of yesterday. The two officers who arrived first alighted from a pretty little vehicle with a fine harness and a beautiful horse — undoubtedly stolen from a château. They wanted to know if they were talking with the farmer or with the owner of the property. They tried to find out about the people of the country and to learn who was the most considerable person in the village; whether there were ladies or not. She didn't tell them a word about us. They asked for provisions to carry away. Madame Thomas made them some turnovers.

By other Germans passing by, the Thomases have had carried off no mean supply of chickens and rabbits.

Saturday, September 5

We see coming along the road opposite the Fontaine farm the carters who were requisitioned Thursday, coming back; the men don't know any news to tell: some have stopped at Longueil Sainte-Marie, and others have been as far as Compiègne, which is full of Germans.

The men who were requisitioned at Angivilliers come back half dead with fright; they were taken, with their supplies, to the middle of the battlefield; the little deaf and dumb man from Cressonsacq was in the first line of battle at Catenoy; he saw many soldiers and drivers fall all about him. He escaped at night.

All these *requisitionnaires* remained forty-eight hours without getting any food at all from the Germans. They say that Clermont contributed one hundred thousand francs to avoid pillage.

M. Thomas has just returned from Saint-Just; he met

no Germans anywhere; it is said that they have gone off obliquely toward the Marne. Madame Pion's house has been turned upside down and pillaged, and all the doors broken in.

Madame Angèle has other news: a great part of Verberie is burned. There has been fighting at Creil, the French retiring after blowing up the bridge; by way of reprisal the Germans have burned a whole street as well as the Faubourg de Nogent-les-Vierges.

A French airplane flew over Pronleroy this afternoon.

Sunday, September 6

Nothing sensational has happened; life is resuming its normal course. We no longer hear the cannon. The idea that the Prussians are between us and Paris fades away — the air is so soft, the sky so blue, and the sun so bright.

In the afternoon we go to tea at Madame Tonnellier's; there is a sound of bells on the road.

'It's M. Paquin with one of his cuirassiers,' says the mayor.

A squad of cuirassiers has marched through the woods of Montmartin after a rear-guard battle; M. Paquin has been out to look for them, and has concealed them on his farm and sent them off one by one into the French lines. I stoop and see a sturdily built man driving a strong horse; behind him are two in working-men's clothes, with tools: it is M. Paquin, and he says to the mayor as we pass: 'We are going to try to slip over Auteuil way.'

Last night just at dusk somebody knocked at the door of the Thomas farm; the women hesitated to open, and the new arrivals whispered: 'We are some of M. Paquin's French soldiers.'

So the door was opened, and before dawn they were taken to Saint-Aubin, where M. Paquin will pick them up to take them farther away.

Monday, September 7

There was High Mass at ten for the dead of the parish. There were many people at the church. The curé of Lieuvillers, who was to officiate, did not come. They say that the roads to Lieuvillers are dangerous and full of Boches.

It is reported that a German general died of exhaustion at Saint-Just and that they gave him a very fine funeral.

It is said that M. Tonnelier has had news. News? From whom? The Russians are said to have entered Berlin and the city is on fire; the German army is taking a backward step and marching toward the north. There is talk of the arrival of a large English army which is coming to help us.

Mere country rumors. It is more probable that the Germans have requisitioned the mills of La Neuville, and there will be no more flour or bread for the people in that section.

We learn with indignant surprise that the Government, which, on August 28, had placarded throughout France its superb declaration about taking the post of honor, has found it good to take something else — flight. Special trains have been put on for the Ministers and their families; they did not consider themselves in safety except at Bordeaux, where they said, far from danger, they could better safeguard the defense of the country!

Another *communiqué*, no less amazing. We learn from it that the operations are going on — success in the Vosges and in Alsace. Two machines have flown over Paris. French airmen chased them, and one was brought down at Rosny. ... Capture of Koenigsberg by the Russians.

Ah! does the rest of France have any idea that Creil, Compiègne, Senlis, are in the enemy's hands? This news so interferes with our dinner that we forget our potatoes sautés and our dessert.

We carry the newspaper to Bouchez; it was Madame Angèle who got it from a refugee; the sheet has made the circuit of the village.

September 8

It seems that Beauvais is not occupied by the Germans, but is still connected with Paris by way of Gisors. Why don't they arrange a postal service by that route?

After the Mass of the Nativity my daughters go out in search of news. Thiéry told the blind man that the Germans were held up behind a stream, the Oise or the Marne; as soon as they build a bridge, our artillery knocks it down. There is fighting between Verberie and Villers-Cotterets; the roar of the cannon has started again and is increasing from hour to hour; a few airplanes pass over very high up in the sky.

A visit from Madame Angèle; she has heard it said that Austria is demanding peace... The Russians will be at Berlin in three weeks... A Prussian who talked with the concierge of the insane asylum at Clermont, said to him: 'If we don't get into Paris, we are lost!'

A soldier from Lieuvillers has admitted that they had nearly twenty-five thousand men put out of action between Verberie and Creil, and ten thousand at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin. They say that the Germans are stretching out along the canal of the Ourcq; all the same, they didn't get into Paris after the fighting on the 4th.

A call from Madame Zahnn, who has gone out to walk with my daughters; she hasn't leave to go far, and, besides, I frighten her a good deal. Her grandfather urged her not to stay long and not to chatter too much. Simone is going to take her back to her grandparents, so that she need not be scolded for being late in returning from the château.

Meanwhile, I go with my two other girls to pick hazelnuts on the edge of the woods. A magnificent sunset, with a deep purple sky in which my daughters claimed to see reflections of a battle.

Wednesday, September 9

My daughters agree at last to take a morning for rest. We are finishing 'Les Chouans,' by Balzac, sitting in the park.

About three o'clock we go to the Tonneliers': they put on the table a beautiful cloth with yellow squares, and porcelain with gold bands, and take from a hiding-place some small silver spoons. On the table there is a great piece of gingerbread, with sweetmeats and peaches; when the smoking teapot is placed on its stand, Madame Tonnelier brings a huge loaf, which she doesn't know where to put, so she puts it on a chair beside me. We talk: M. Tonnelier doesn't believe that the end of the war is near; he advises me to lay in a stock of coffee and gasoline. M. Paquin, who goes to and fro about the country with fugitive soldiers, almost all of whom he has got back into our lines, told him this morning that they were fighting at this moment the greatest battle that the world has ever seen.

At Madame Boulard's they tell how this battle is being fought in the Verdun region and has already lasted four days.

It is reported that at Montiers there are twenty-two Boche officers who are looting, in automobiles with engines always going, ready to carry them off in case anything unforeseen happens.

At Dupérour's another report: the Germans are occupying Melun and Poitiers. Somebody has read in a newspaper that the German staff is trying to cut all the railroad lines in order to isolate Bordeaux from the rest of France. A man returning from Clermont announces that England is sending four army corps to our help, of troops from the Indies, and that regiments of Senegalese are marching upon Saint-Just.

M. Thomas has tried to go as far as Saint-Just for news; but the road was occupied by German detachments, who fired in the air to compel any one passing to stop. M.

Perrot de Gournay, who refused to dismount from his horse or to turn back, was badly beaten and thrown from his horse, which they took; they then placed his saddle on an old worn-out horse, with which he was allowed to go on.

Thursday, September 10

M. Thomas sends word to us that we can send letters by way of Saint-Just, whence the mail is taken to Gisors. By day the road is opened; there are no enemy troops at Saint-Just. We write to our relatives at Angers, Orléans, and the Vendée, and give our letters to the mayor.

A carriage from Clermont passed yesterday, leaving a newspaper; this was dated Tuesday and announces that the Germans, being turned back from Paris, are on their way to the southeast; the defensive works of the capital are being strengthened; troops of all arms are crowding into Paris. Declaration of England: The British Empire, whatever may happen in France, will continue, with Russia, a war which shall last until the Central Empires have restored the territory taken and repaired the damage caused... In a World War like this now in progress, the events of the first six or twelve months of the campaign give no indication of the final victory... An English army of two hundred thousand men has been formed in a few days by voluntary enlistments; we must give it time to be taught.

Another French army is being formed at Rouen; a swarm of voluntary enlistments throughout the country.

Bits of local gossip coming from Madame Zahnn: the people of La Neuville have returned from their exodus half dead from hunger and exhaustion; they were unable to obtain rooms anywhere, but slept eight days in the fields and have returned to find themselves cheek-by-jowl with the Brussels refugees settled in their houses, and with their destroyed property to be restored. The people of Montiers and Gournay also have returned from Normandy. They

say that the loads of provisions that we sent to them were taken by the French army.

Friday, September 11

Somebody gives us the *Petit Journal* of the 6th September. *Communiqué*: 'I. The situation of the French and German armies has undergone no significant change.' However insignificant it may be, we who are the invaded ones admit that we should be glad enough to know just *what* it is! The paper goes on: 'The sweeping maneuver of the enemy seems to be definitely at an end. II. On our center and right, Lorraine and the Vosges, the situation is unchanged. III. At Paris, from which the enemy is now pushed back, the defensive works are proceeding actively. They have sent away the women, children, old men — all the useless mouths.'

During the evening we learn that Cernoy is occupied by French dragoons. It is said that there are about twenty Germans with their officers lying in the woods of Trois-Étots.

Madame Angèle warns us of the danger in going outside the village. Madame Dupéroux has just returned from Saint-Just, where she has been for provisions; she saw on the square in front of the mayor's office Boche prisoners guarded by four of our soldiers.

Saturday, September 12

The news is confirmed that the French army has won a great victory along the Ourcq and the Marne. The Germans are not only halted, but thrown back. They have turned about. God grant that we may not find on the road disbanded troops who avenge themselves by burning and pillaging.

It is confirmed, too, that the French troops surround us. Our dragoons have been seen at Noroy. There are German

stragglers lying in the woods over by Trois-Étots, Maignelay, and Francière; two hundred and fifty Prussians, the remnant of a retreating regiment of engineers, have passed through Clermont, going toward Montdidier.

Lieuville and L'Églantier are wholly reoccupied by our troops, and we hear nothing of fighting in the neighborhood.

Madame Thomas, when we went to see her, told us that she talked yesterday at Saint-Just with Dr. Delalande; that he attended the Prussian officer who was taken with the prisoners at Maignelay; this officer admits that the Prussian army is in full flight, and without further fighting. The doctor had seen a bright light on the road; he believed that it was Pronleroy burning; but on approaching, he saw that the reflection came from farther away, from the direction of Compiègne probably. Some think that the Prussians were burning their dead, as they do when there are too many to bury, after saturating them with oil.

For the first time in a fortnight we do not hear the cannon.

We have been able to secure five boxes of matches. We had only half a box left, and we were wondering whether we should have to go back to the flint and steel of the old days.

Sunday, September 13

About nine o'clock Simone starts for church. She wants to rehearse a few accompaniments on the harmonium before the service.

Caudien, the bell-ringer, comes to her and says: 'Madoiselle, I think it is well to warn you that there is danger here; go back at once to the château; the Germans are in the lowlands.'

Having made inquiries, we find that there has been firing upon motor-cars. Hidden marksmen have riddled a large car driven by French soldiers; a motor, protected by

screens, they think, crossed the road like a whirlwind, firing in every direction. There were German names on this second car. M. Tonnelier learns that the first car held French recruits from Gournay, with non-commissioned recruiting officers. Several of the young men fell wounded in the arms of their comrades. The Germans had stationed themselves at the fork in the roads to Lieuvillers, Saint-Just, and La Neuville, and hidden themselves in the thick masses of the hedge. From the Tonneliers' they could hear the shots very plainly.

A Taube has been brought down near Lieuvillers; the officer was killed, and they found among his papers orders for the Prussian troops to retreat by way of Belgium because the men had ammunition for only three days.

The papers say that the Emperor William gave the order to fall back, his troops having been decimated by the battles of the Marne. There is a report going about that he is asking for peace.

Monday, September 14

M. Tonnelier comes up with a beaming face and says:

'I just passed a motor full of French officers; the driver slowed up and a captain leaned out toward me.

“Do you know about the victory around here? How we did give it to them!”

We are anxious to see how victorious troops look, and as none pass Pronleroy, we shall go to La Neuville. Madame Thomas says that some cousins of hers are in quarters there with their regiments.

What a joy to walk over a good French road without fear of walking into an enemy patrol! We almost run, as light of foot as schoolgirls on a holiday.

As we enter La Neuville, we see a chasseur and then some dragoons around a well. The soldiers are exhausted, their uniforms all torn and black with powder; their horses are

thin and lame, with the hair half scraped off, and all covered with wounds, to make one weep.

Near the church is a group of officers standing and talking with great animation; we dare not approach them, for they have something else to do than answer inquisitive women's questions. None the less, a young spark struts up and down as my daughters pass, making a great show with his riding-whip, and his chest out.

There are soldiers pushing baby-carriages with children in them, making them laugh and play.

We spy the curé's servant and ask her for news.

'Since Saturday parties of troops follow one another in quick succession. We put up nine men yesterday in the rectory; to-day we had only one; these chasseurs have just come, and they are going to ask us to put them up too.'

This morning some forty disbanded Germans were shot; they had waved a white flag, and then, when our soldiers approached them, they fired on them. A woman of the neighborhood also was shot; she had tried to warn the Prussian posts of the approach of the French army.

La Neuville has the look of an enormous barrack. Soldiers pour out from every door; the vestibules of the houses have been filled with straw and transformed into stables; there are horses in the lanes and in the yards.

After a little hesitation we questioned an amiable-looking young soldier; he seemed delighted to talk with ladies.

He is of the Third Chasseurs, come from Sarrebourg, and the Eighth Chasseurs is not far away; the whole Thirteenth Corps has left Alsace, to fall back upon the Marne. 'Yes, we had a victory and a good one; the German losses were very much larger than ours. A stiff cavalry fight at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin.' He is of a regiment from Orléans and a native of Gien. They pursued, but they couldn't possibly overtake the Boches. They ran like rabbits.

Tuesday, September 15

Again we begin to hear the cannon, very loud, but we know that it means the pursuit of the beaten.

After luncheon, we set out for La Neuville, with baskets of provisions, wine, and fruit which we shall give the curé's servant to distribute among the soldiers.

Fewer troops in La Neuville. As we pass, a country girl is talking with a shepherd whose flock is grazing in the fields.

'Well! *they* won't eat me!'

I understood whom she meant, so I asked:

'Have *they* come back? Has any one seen them?'

'Seems as though there was a squadron of Boche cavalry between here and Pronleroy — cutting off the road,' said the shepherd.

'Oh! for my part, I don't think much of those Pruscoes!' And she went ahead, promising to give us a sign — 'because of the little ladies' — if she saw anything suspicious.

We returned home with our hearts beating fast, but without any disagreeable encounter; it was one of those stupid rumors such as fly around so thick in time of war.

Madame Tonnelier calls out to us from her window that the Third Chasseurs has just passed through Pronleroy. Madame Angèle fed them as well as she could.

September 16

Madame Zahnn, who has just come from La Neuville, joins us at Madame Tonnelier's, where we are lunching; she has seen somebody in command, who tells her that a regiment is coming to Pronleroy and the officers will be quartered at the château. My daughters dance for joy at this news, and set off to prepare the rooms; an hour after, M. Tonnelier sends word to us that there will be no billeting at the château.

Thursday, September 17

All the newspapers arrive. They send us *Le Petit Parisien*, *L'Écho de Paris*, *Le Matin*, *Le Bonnet Rouge*; the democratic *Alliance of the Oise* tells of local events: yesterday, the Thirteenth passed through the station at Dieppe with nine hussars, who told their experiences. Pursued by a squadron of German cavalry after the battle of Nanteuil-le-Haudouin, separated from their regiment after having killed some of those who attacked them, they went forward again and took refuge in the forest of Chevière. The hussars concealed themselves in the thickets of willows along the marshes; on the fourth day, hearing no more sounds of horses, they entered an abandoned village, took some food, some civilian clothes, and went by way of Gournay to Bray in Normandy, where they made themselves known at the military headquarters of the place, pointing out where they had hidden their weapons and their uniforms.

They send word to us that the mails have been reëstablished; for letters to be sent, one must address an envelope to the mayor of Gisors, to be handed to the mayor of Beauvais, who will open the envelope and dispatch the inner one which bears the address of the person for whom it is really intended.

You see how simple that is and how prompt!

We read all the back numbers of the newspapers. Ukases of the Tsar de-Germanizing the names of Russian cities: St. Petersburg will hereafter be called Petrograd.

September 18

Bouchez, being a Territorial, has received his route-sheet; he is going as a hospital attendant to Cherbourg. At five-thirty he knocks at my daughters' door to bid them good-bye. They give him some letters to put in the post at Bretagne, far away from the fighting zone.

Madame Thomas is going to take in her wagons the fourteen men requisitioned from Pronleroy to Liancourt.

A return offensive by the Germans is reported — from the artillery ten kilometres from Saint-Just; they say that the line Saint-Just-Clermont has been cut again; a French regiment having retreated in hot haste.

Grumbings from the people of Saint-Just: the French cavalry have wasted their supplies for the horses, the troops have peddled chocolate, eaten all the grapes from the trellises, and stolen every pair of shoes they could find.

But the men were hungry; their clothes were in rags, and their feet covered with blood!

September 19

Have been to Madame Thomas's. We find her quarreling with her workmen; they threaten her with six months in jail, accusing her of letting them die of hunger. M. Thomas appears and the brawling creatures subside at once. The engineers have repaired the line, and M. Thomas has seen several train-loads of French soldiers detrained at Saint-Just. He has passed gun-carriages on the road and the country is swarming with troops.

We go to take this news to M. Tonnelier. A small girl tells us that there is a regiment at the end of the village and the leader wants to speak to the mayor. The night has fallen while we have been chattering; the fog is thick enough to cut with a knife — and I was to meet my daughters on their return!

M. Thomas reassures me; they must be at the château; he saw them pass him, laden with loaves of bread that they were taking home from the Fontaine farm.

It is so dark that at the street corner M. Tonnelier suddenly seizes me by the arm: 'Why, Madame la Marquise, you were walking straight into the pond!' And in fact the water was splashing under my feet.

We walk into a sentry, who puts out his musket.

'You can't pass.'

'I am the mayor; the colonel has sent for me.'

'Go on, it's all right — go ahead, madame.'

I go straight ahead and come to another line of soldiers.

'Halt there! What do you want?'

'I am looking for the colonel.'

'There isn't any colonel here.'

'Then some officer — isn't there any officer here?'

A shadow appears out of the fog.

'Yes. I command the battalion, there are only two of us left out of twenty-four of the regiment — all killed, wounded, or missing. What do you want, madame?'

'I was told that there were officers here, so I came to place my château of Pronleroy at their disposal. There are rooms all ready.'

'Impossible to leave our batteries; they have this cross-road under their fire; we have been notified of units of German cavalry wandering through the country; they might attack Pronleroy to-night. We are in an excellent position to greet them with a plunging fire. Don't be afraid if you hear firing to-night; they shall not pass...we are on the spot.'

'May I not offer you some dinner?'

'Thanks, you are very kind,' he says, as if to a little girl who offered him a jelly-tart; 'very kind; we will go and lie in the barn on dry straw and shall be royally comfortable. But if we cannot go to your house, a little hot food sent here will do us very well — especially my comrade, who is not feeling quite up to the mark.'

'The trouble is, I have nobody to bring it; the last man in my service went away yesterday.'

'I will send a soldier with some bottles to get what you are good enough to send us, and then I can send somebody to go with you, for the orders are very strict.'

In the fog my soldier and I pass the sentry; they exchange

countersigns; then we run into a man walking, who proves to be M. Tonnelier wandering through the village.

'It is incredible!... I am looking for the colonel; there is no colonel, and no sentry will let me pass.'

'There is a commandant, and this good fellow will take you straight to his post.'

M. Tonnelier goes off with the soldier. I inform my daughters that we shall share our soup with officers.

A timid rap at the door of the kitchen. I go to open it, lamp in hand. Two shadows in uniform, the first that of an officer, so deathly pale that it is startling; he seems to float in his skin, like one who had lost all his flesh in a few days; he is bent over double and seems very ill. We ask what we can add to the soup, the beef, the wine, and the dessert which we had prepared.

'A little sausage.'

'We have none.'

'Then forget it! I was simply trying to make sure of my breakfast for to-morrow.'

'Will you have a box of tunny fish, or chocolate?'

'Whatever you give us will be welcome. We have no supplies. This morning we breakfasted on bread and pears that we stole.'

'Can't we give you some blankets for the night, the fog is so cold!'

'Oh — with this fine hot soup we shall be warm enough, and then we shall be as dry as a bone in the straw, after lying for six days in wet ditches.'

He adds, as he thanks us (having now become the most urbane man in the world):

'And are you alone, madame, in such a great house with no men to look after you?'

'The two that I had are mobilized.'

'But no old men, too old to serve at the front?'

'They weren't willing to do anything.'

'The war is hard for all! The women of France are making war, too, in their way. Madame, I feel bound to say to you that we may have a fierce fight to-night; you should get a cellar ready where you can take refuge in case of need, with blankets and mattresses for you and the young women, and with a second entrance if the first one should be obstructed. Put some tools in the cellar, pick-axes and stakes in case of a cave-in.' And he saluted me as people salute each other during the war: 'May God keep you, madame, and your children.'

After he went away, we talk about the contrast between the two officers, one, strong, active, and good-humored, the other, taciturn, thoughtful, anxious; both equally attached to their duty and to their men — the thoroughly French heroism of the army in both its aspects.

With Suzanne, who has less cold in her head than her sisters, we take mattresses, pillows, and blankets into the cellar, hunt up a pick and two stakes in the kitchen garden, and put candles with them and two boxes of matches.

Our dinner at an end, I sent my daughters to bed in their room, for the cellar is very cold and everything seems quiet; I wait till midnight — still, everything is quiet, and I return to my own room.

Sunday, September 20

Go to High Mass. The curé reproaches the parishioners for not supplying blessed bread, although the smallest particle of bread is so hard to obtain. What will happen to-day? — for it is always a Sunday when things happen.

On leaving the church, we see, on the road to Cressonsacq — going toward the north this time — the blue-and-red figures of our soldiers. We meet a squad in fours, with their non-commissioned officers, all so pale and so weary that we ask them:

'Are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?'

'Alas, there is no bakery in the whole country!'

How regretfully they say that!

'Come along; I have some bread at home.'

'No time; we shall be all right at the next halt.'

Farther along we see more soldiers and hurry home to make sandwiches of bread, and I open the little gate in the park and we pass out the sandwiches in packages to the soldiers as they pass and pour wine into their canteens.

While we are breakfasting, some one knocks loudly on the kitchen door...two soldiers asking for something to eat; we warm up the soup and fried potatoes and they devour all that we give them; they belong to the 124th. They are going north to turn the flank of the Boches; the greater part of the regiment has passed through La Neuville, having arranged to meet at the cross-road of Lieuvillers. The Germans have lost many men, we not so many...they have never fought with the English...they have met some of them who had strayed away from their units.

My daughters go to tell Madame Angèle that, if there are still soldiers to be fed, she must have our bell rung; I go to rest in my chamber while the children go to Vespers.

The bell rings. I find three soldiers lying on the steps of the kitchen.

'Give us something to eat, my good lady; we can't walk any farther.'

There is an enormous pot of soup and potatoes; the soldiers cut thick slices of bread, hold out their canteens for wine, and march away very smartly after many thanks, forgetting their rifles, which they have left in the grass. I notice them when they are already far away and run along the road after them with the rifles in my arms.

Then there appears a late comer, decidedly jovial and a little noisy, if not drunk...he came by way of Venète. 'I must find my 154th at Lieuvillers — is that far? You look to me like a kind-hearted woman; will you kindly send

my family news of me? The letters that soldiers write never arrive, but a lady like you, with a stamp on the envelope, that will go all right. Here is the address: La Chapelle Saint-Aubert by Saint-Aubin du Cormier. Tell them that on the 20th of September you saw Private Rossignol, their son, pass here in good health; that he salutes them and asks them to pay you back two francs... for my tobacco. I haven't a sou. I am a farmer's son, and if you have it, madame, you'll lend me a two-franc piece, won't you?'

Next comes a party of five young soldiers, very lively and not tired, from another regiment in the west. But the French soldiers are always hungry; they do honor to the soup and the beef. Simone has gone to the Fontaines' for bread and has taken with her the key to the cellar. It is impossible to give them wine; I discover the remains of a bottle of brandy in a decanter, which is greeted with shouts of joy.

September 21

The artillery duel is resumed.

M. Tonnelier sends word to us at nine o'clock that a regiment on the way from Lorraine to Estrées without supplies will halt here this afternoon. He asks us to prepare hot food, and he will see to it that they have the necessary bread.

Joséphine refuses to do anything. 'When the cannon roar like that, my legs give way ... and my son Gabriel, who hasn't enough to eat in the army — why should I put myself out to give these others food?'

We can get nothing from her but tears.

My daughters and I hurry out to the garden and pick vegetables; we make several pots of soup, of which I undertake the manufacture, while my daughters bring fried potatoes in enormous platefuls. We hear the lively clashing of harness; brief words of command — 'Halt — rest.'

Madame Zahnn and some children from the village help us to carry out the pots of soup. Suzanne has gone to the blind man's house to set up a third feeding-post in the main street. Madame Angèle and Madame Dupérourx have joined forces to cook all the morning. Simone serves on a table in front of a small gate in the park on the road to Cressonsacq. The 'Blue Devils' are there perched on the wall beside the road, their caps swaggeringly tipped over their ears.

There is a lot of going and coming. Suzanne carries oceans of coffee to the blind man's house, who has none, and drenches her cloak so thoroughly that she is obliged to go home to change.

Many soldiers have no receptacles for food; we don't know where to pour the soup. Simone and I go to Dupérourx's to get plates. The spectacle which presents itself to us there is that of a soldier bent over, and Madame Dupérourx, armed with a huge needle, is darning the holes in the seat of his trousers as best she can. The soldier, a Provençal, chatters: 'This ain't just the best to show ladies, but I was even worse just now; the more it cracks, the bigger it gets. The gun didn't have anything to do with it, but it was my figure which is too big for my breeches.'

He laughed and so did we; it's better to laugh than to cry.

My soup was a great success.

'This is great luck to get something hot to eat! I can swear that this is good soup; you are a fine cook.'

'This isn't any habit of mine; it's the first time I ever made soup.'

'Impossible; in that case what do you eat at home?'

A comrade nudges him with his elbow: 'Don't you see that this is the lady of the château? In these places it's the servants who do the cooking.'

We go the whole length of the street to the blind man's,

giving to every soldier fried potatoes, coffee, and fruit. Madame Zahnn absolutely insists on giving something and talks about cream. The men make up faces; I advise grog, which delights everybody.

We talk with the officers, who do justice also to our cuisine.

We learn that this regiment, from Nice, guarded the passes of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines and fought day and night for two months and a half. Madame Zahnn, who is very anxious about her brother, Raymond Linger, of whom nothing has been heard since the 20th of August, asks them if news comes quickly about people who are dead or missing; and they try to comfort her. Madame Dupérour's shop is full. The soldiers come in by tens and fifteens, pocket-book in hand. Two Alpine troopers dispute and then fight. Madame Zahnn separates them: 'For Heaven's sake, haven't you enough hammering at the Boches to do?'

They are especially on the lookout for socks, boxes of biscuit and chocolate; they are surprised that the wine for which they have to pay ten francs the litre should be sold to them here for seventy-five centimes. Our baskets of pears are emptied in an instant. We go for more to the fruit-sellers; Simone is escorted by a sergeant, who sees to it that nobody is forgotten.

The commandant talks a long time with M. Tonnelier and assures him that at present we have nothing to fear and thanks him very courteously for the reception given to his command. The halt at Pronleroy will be one of his pleasantest memories of the war. The Alpines having gone, we returned to the château with Madame Zahnn, to take tea. The two officers of artillery, who were here yesterday, have written the names of the château and our own in their notebooks; the commandant of the chasseurs does the same. If they are not killed, we shall see them back, and they will send us a card the first of the year.

September 23

We hear the cannon continuously. We can distinguish clearly the reports of the heavy German pieces, the shells taking much longer to explode and having a mournful sound.

September 24

When we open our windows in the morning, we see round-about puffs of smoke at regular intervals. We conclude that it is the smoke from the batteries of artillery; and the noise seems to come from a greater distance. M. Tonnelier tells us that it is the smoke of the train from Estrées, which has resumed its regular army transport.

Madame Dupéroux has borrowed from M. Fontaine a horse and cart and has gone to Creil to renew her stock of groceries; she travels eighty kilometres in a day and has brought back a supply of all necessaries except petroleum.

Friday, September 25

With Suzanne, the best walker of my daughters, went to Lieuvillers to see my notary; some army wagons on the road, the rear guard of a supply column; from the top of the hill of Fief, we see what we think are sentries who will prevent our passing; but they are nothing but cows, which move away before us.

Another column with provisions; wagons covered with tarpaulin, containing wounded men, with German inscriptions on the walls; these are war prisoners; a mounted escort stops to ask us the road to Saint-Just; they are coming from Estrées. I ask for the number of their army corps and hear the number fourteen indistinctly.

The whole left side of the road is torn to pieces; we learn that the cavalry and artillery ride on the grass bordering the road to avoid the noise that might betray their presence to the enemy.

At Lieuvillers the sign of the notary has been taken

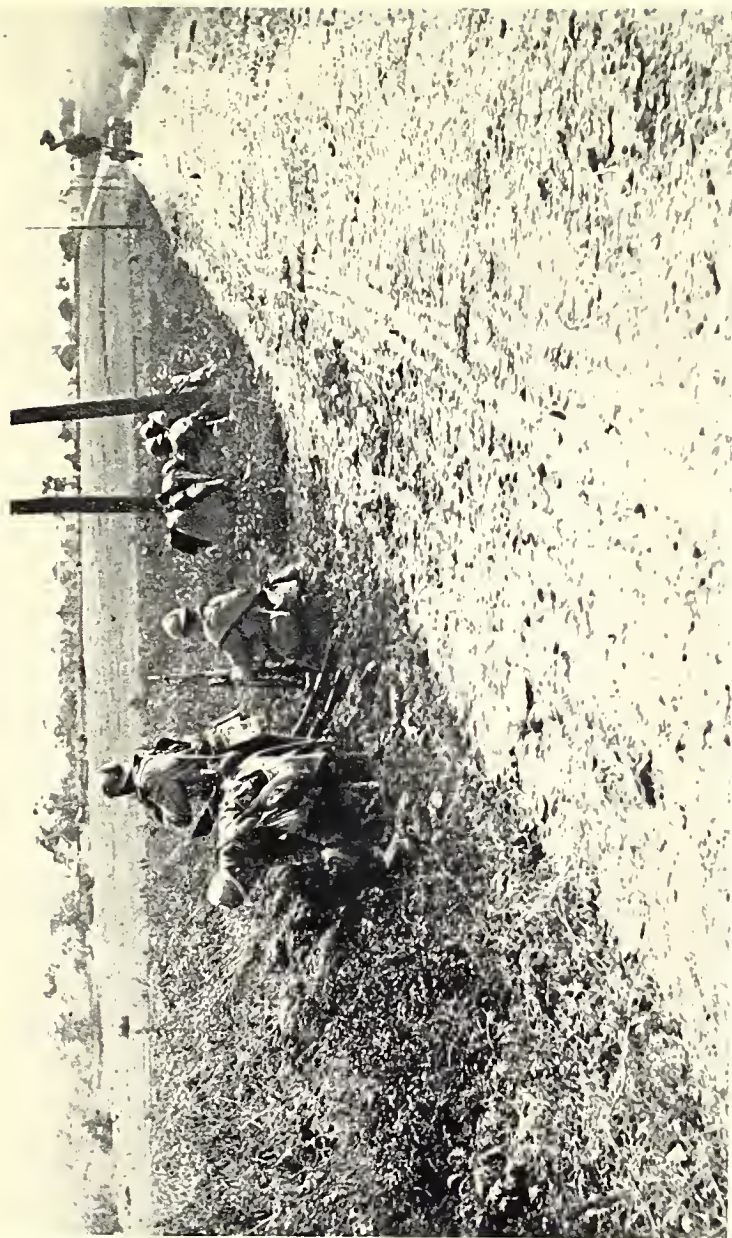
down and everything is closed; we knock all the same. M. Siou opens the door himself, and pays me a little money; they will try to sell wood and fruit for making cider. He has just returned from Normandy, where he has been visiting with his parents. Madame Siou takes us into her kitchen garden, which is very well kept — nothing has been stolen. M. Siou takes us by a cross-road which cuts off two kilometres of our journey back to Pronleroy, to a pond with willow trees and great piles of timber. On Sunday the French troops took possession of all that they could find in the way of wagons, gates, and machines, to barricade all the entrances to the village. Farther along we saw trenches dug; we were surprised to find them so small, or that such a ditch could be of any use. A great roar of a motor; it is an airplane with a tricolored cockade, flying very low.

We return exhausted from our journey. Simone has prepared tea for us, which is refreshing.

In the evening a terrible cannonade. We are told that the firing is from very heavy English naval guns.

September 27

We have been notified that our mail is at La Neuville and that we are requested to go there and get it. While my daughters go to Catechism, I go for the mail and bring back a score or more of letters and threescore newspapers. Our family supposes that we are dead at Pronleroy; many relatives and friends have fallen on the field of honor. The disappearance of young Sosthènes de Chanallheilles, an only child of Orléans, saddens my daughters, and the heroism of our young cousin, La Guillonnière. To make a dangerous reconnaissance, a veteran of the platoon is selected. His fellows say: 'He's a dead man!' — a father of a family of seven children. La Guillonnière goes to an officer and volunteers for the dangerous task ... goes — and does not return.



LONGPONT, ALSNE: SOLDIERS MAKING INDIVIDUAL SHELTERS ON THE EDGE OF THE ROAD

September 29

We hear much of the quarries of Tracy-le-Mont; they were in the hands of the Swiss, they say — in the German secret service, as is proved now. They had prepared in them locations for heavy batteries, dugouts which are believed to be filled with provisions and munitions of war for months.

Letters from Orléans say that the regiments of Blois and Orléans, in which we number many friends, are decimated by artillery; in one there remain four officers only. One of the colonels took it upon himself not to transmit an order of attack over open ground, saying that such a march against batteries of artillery would accomplish nothing, and that not a living man would come back; he alone kept his regiment intact; to save him from a court-martial, they talked of an error in interpreting orders.

October 1

The *communiqués* say that Ribécourt and Roye are in the hands of the French. Chaulnes and Lassigny are occupied by the Germans, who are digging trenches and fortifying themselves, and making headway. The left wing of our army has won Arras, and the front seems to be stabilized about twenty kilometres above us.

It seems that the Staff has left Fitz-James for Amiens.

Troops are in camp at Saint-Just; they send a carriage and a corporal for provisions to Pronleroy; they find nothing and come on to the château. We sell them much in the way of vegetables and fruit; the non-com. is full of high spirits.

'One more battle like the Marne, and the Germans will go back over the frontier. They will be at home for Christmas.'

That is not the opinion of the officers. They think the campaign is the beginning of a long war, which will bury

itself under the earth — the war of trenches — this phrase has just come into use!

Letter from Mademoiselle d'Hugonneau of Orléans says, 'I believe that the Germans must have made some advance into the region of the Oise'! The letter that my daughters sent must have been intercepted as giving too many details of the military situation. Letters from Anjou; the commandant of Épénoux is in the hospital seriously wounded.

At the doors of the hospital trains many wounded men wave German helmets and weapons.

A Boche soldier, who was being taken care of in our ambulance, said: 'If we had been conquerors, we should never have touched the Cathedral of Reims. It's because Champagne is lost to us that we destroy everything within reach.'

They say that the Emperor William was waiting in the neighborhood of Nancy, following with his field-glass the progress of the battle so as to make a triumphant entry with his guard and his show troops. The success of Castelnau at the Grand Couronné made him retreat in hot haste.

October 2

We have read with delight of the resurrection of the office of Marshal — they are talking of giving the bâton to Joffre, Gallieni, Pau, and Castelnau; this will be fine for the grand entry into Berlin. The paper extends its sympathy to the gallant King of the Belgians and to the people who are honored in having such a sovereign. It depends only on France to have a like honor herself. Our princes who were in exile have asked leave to return to France to serve the country in danger. What a contrast to the Ministers of the Republic, who have gone as far as possible from threatened Paris!...they and the women whom they have taken with them, to make holiday, as we know, at the 'Chapon fin' of Bordeaux.

October 3

Letters which tell hospital stories.

The little wounded Irishman who asked everybody where Paris was would not believe that he had reached there; and when he learned that the enemy was far away, slept peacefully.

The frightfully wounded soldier who asks the nurses, the surgeon, everybody: 'Could not some one tell me if they have picked up my lieutenant?'

The lieutenant of eighteen, when they tried to make him inhale ether before an amputation, said no, but asked for a cigarette and smoked it to the end.

Rear-Admiral Aubry was visiting Brest and encouraging the wounded; he received a dispatch, turned pale, and continued his visit with no further sign. He had just learned of the death of his son.

October 5

Met the postman, who opens his bag, but has nothing for us; so much the better, the family at Orléans is beginning to pester me to have my daughters return to the school; they will arrive after the school year has begun, will lose their places, etc.; they do not consider, at the rear, that traveling is still impossible in the army zone.

Sunday, October 11

Still the same life: troops passing; pleasant officers who will not or cannot say anything; newspapers which speak only of 'positions unchanged' and difficulty in distributing supplies; no service; money that doesn't come in or go out either. No one will pay tradesmen until after the war. My three hundred and fifty francs will last some weeks!

Monday, October 12

People talk of desperate battles out Arras way; that enables them to slide over what is going on between the

Aisne and the Oise. They say nothing about the falling back at Lassigny. Roye is retaken by the Boches — let us agree that that isn't a strategic maneuver! — the result being that the Germans are drawing nearer to us.

My daughters are very busy with the subscriptions for the *Écho de Paris*, the *Tricot du Combattant*. French generosity is without limit... forty thousand francs in the first three days; and for the winter we are going to send to the trenches 1,800,000 pairs of socks, 1,300,000 woolen jackets, as many blankets, and individual packages of tobacco and cigarettes.

Tuesday, October 13

My daughters leave to-morrow. We are making up the budget of this first vacation passed at home. How short-sighted is human wisdom! We dreamed of a period of calm well-established, and everything has come near going to ruin in the fighting. No; those who uproot a race, a family, do not know what calamities they draw down upon the heads of their descendants when they put a signature at the foot of a deed of sale. If we had remained the proprietors of our Grifferie on the placid banks of the Loire, none of the agonies of the invasion would have touched us. Among those hereditary tenants, who, after having called the Foucaults their lords, have called them 'our masters,' with a certain sense of possession, we should not have been abandoned by our personal staff. Neither Manette, nor Égal, nor Julienne would serve for a matter of wages; they had for the château, for her whom they called Madame la Marquise, the passionate devotion which they retained for all of my people.

My children are asleep, tired out by having dragged about their valises all day and tying up packages — and I think of the instability of things... Will there be advances and retreats? Shall we see the enemy? Will Pronleroy next year

offer a roof under which my daughters and I may rest our heads?

Wednesday, October 14

On foot before dawn; we must shut up all the rooms. Joséphine shows a certain satisfaction in preparing our breakfast. Madame Thomas has sent us her carriage with curtains drawn; it will protect us from the cold a little on the way to Clermont. Saint-Just, the regular station, is still closed to civilians. M. Tonnelier has given us very detailed safe-conducts, with our description; he has had them countersigned by the military authorities at the office at Estrées. We start at eight o'clock on a dark gloomy morning. My girls weep...several children have come to kiss them good-bye. Madame Zahnn weeps also.

We have cut down our baggage as much as possible, but we carry a great box of vegetables, fruits, and preserves for the military canteen at the Gare du Nord.

At the great down grade from Saint-Aubin there are immense fortified works, *chevaux-de-frise*, stretched barbed wire, and dugouts under the embankment — a whole mass of defenses which has checked nothing. Above the ravine on the right an iron signpost cut in two...by a shell or a wagon sliding down the slope?

There are some bomb-holes in the station at Clermont.

The train? It will start between ten and eleven. Impossible to take a ticket to Paris; the escort stops at Creil.

'But in that case ——?'

'Nobody knows; you will have to find out.'

We see trains pass stuffed with soldiers who laugh and sing. At Creil we alight.

A train for civilians will start for Paris in the afternoon at an uncertain hour — that depends on many things.

It is one o'clock. We seat ourselves in the buffet, eat sandwiches and drink tea. There is none but condensed milk.

A train-man with a badge waves his arm and cries, 'Train for Paris won't start till the travelers who have viséed passes show them at the office.'

So we went off and found a grouchy officer.

'What are you going to Orléans for?'

'To take my children to their boarding-school.'

'Can't you put them anywhere in the zone...However, it is all right; go on.'

The train is made up; they pile us into third-class cars without windows; we can see very plainly the burned streets of Creil, the black, yawning, roofless houses. Interminable stops at Chantilly and Orry-la-Ville to let army trains pass; it is six o'clock when we set foot on the platform of the Gare du Nord. I ask about the canteen — it's on track Z, a kilometre away; the only porter I have found takes possession of me; there will be no more carriages, so we set out for the Orsay Station; our luggage does not go with us.

Paris in war-time, gloomy beyond words, lights with blue glasses which cast pallid reflections. Arrived at the Orsay Station — 'A train for Orléans?...there won't be one until to-morrow.'

We go to the information office.

At forty minutes past twelve we can get an omnibus.

We go to the Café d'Orsay and have a bountiful dinner. A blonde nurse, very much bepearled, very elegant and painted, comes to beg... 'For the station canteen, please!'

I accost her. 'Madame, we are bringing fruits and preserves for the soldiers who pass through; will your canteen take them?'

'Oh, how gladly! I will take you to Madame André! Are you waiting for a train?'

'At twelve-forty.'

'You have time enough... if your girls choose, they can help us with the service; we have notice of a great crowd coming at ten o'clock.'

We are very amiably received by a red-faced woman of uncertain age, who seems rather curious and makes us tell our story of the Odyssey of the women of the invaded country.

We are welcomed in the well-warmed canteen. My daughters are given aprons and knives to cut the cakes; they pile our valises in a corner. Denyse, who is dropping with fatigue and groaning more and more with the longing for sleep, arranges our pears in little baskets.

A whistle, followed by the entry of young men with badges, very important in manner, and airy young nurses with big diamonds in their ears and blouses cut very low.

'*Brouhaha!*... Here they are!... Here they are!'

A party of soldiers... we have to pour the soup into cups, distribute sandwiches and cakes; at the table where we are serving, the soldiers have forgotten to bring their cups.

Madame André is beside herself. 'They're mere children; they don't think of anything. What are they doing here on the front without cups, those poor little fellows! Run and call them back, mesdames, they ought to be still at the station...'

Enter a troop of scamps, a little inclined to be braggart, who fool with the ladies, take them by the shoulder, and call them 'my dear.'

They flood us, too, with coffee and hot wine and biscuits. The time passes quickly. Twelve-twenty. Madame André sends us the cook of the canteen to carry our baggage and settle us in our train omnibus. Few people, a small dirty compartment to ourselves... we can stretch out and sleep.

Thursday, October 15

We stretch ourselves out upon hard benches. A pallid dawn appears about six o'clock. Simone and I are not very fatigued: we swallow a cup of coffee and some biscuits and watch the little ones sleep. We stop at every station, and

always some one begs, 'For our wounded, if you please.' Armed soldiers guard the railway... strange soldiers with civilian overcoats, yellow or gray, huddled up to the nose, with caps too big for them!

Here is Cercotte. First, the English camp: comfortable tents, magnificent motor-cars, khaki uniforms, most elegant, with ample cloaks. And then the other camp — that of the Indians, the soldiers in green and red turbans, marching along the road on foot or on strange active little horses. Where are we? These are visions of a dream, scenes from the country of the Thousand and One Nights. They watch us pass, while from narrow conical striped tents issue Oriental melodies that cut with the sharp notes of the fife.

Les Aubrais: a stop of three quarters of an hour, while gendarmes invade our compartment and examine our papers. It is cold; the trees have lost their leaves; we are entering a region which is redolent of winter. The station at Orléans and the streets are crowded with French and English soldiers.

This is the moment of farewells; everybody is embracing. We have taken twenty-five hours to reach Orléans!

I go to have a cup of tea and some cake at the Saint George Bakery in rue Bannier, the finest street of the city. An English supply motor comes up, bringing to the camp prodigious numbers of small loaves and cakes.

I go to the mayor's office to have my passport viséed. I find an officer in a great hurry, not familiar with that sort of safe-conduct from the zone of the armies; he sends me to the civil commissariat, whence they send me to the army bureau. All this takes me a very long time, for I lose myself in the labyrinth of corridors; at last a non-commissioned officer affixes the requisite seal!

I go to see my children again for a moment. Simone is intent upon all that she has heard her school companions talk about. It seems that the English have hired houses

for three years. Everything goes on normally at the school; many girls have returned, whose mothers have left the country, in order to be more in touch with what is going on.

It is time for me to go; in the rue de la République I meet officers who are laughing and jesting with stylish women... these officers are polished up, well combed and well dressed; it is a very different thing from the army stepping out to face the enemy.

The train is crowded; the passengers mixed together unpleasantly enough; at the station at Brétigny, I fancy that I see my cousin Marie-Thérèse de Chabot in a nurse's uniform.

They make me get down at Austerlitz, although my ticket is for Orsay. I have myself driven to the *pension* of the Pobéguin family, where I am accustomed to stay. There is no longer any door-plate, no sheaves of flags above the door. The salon is full of empty beds, prepared for wounded; the house is open, however, and I can have a room.

At dinner no one that I know; the table very military — Intendant X, the wife of Colonel C., who is being cared for at Saint-Jean de Dieu. We talk about the war. They explain, lamely, why Paris, whose defense was not ready, has not yet been occupied by the enemy, who has turned eastward, without apparent reason.

October 16

No more auto-busses; the tramways still go on. I take one at the corner of rue Oudinot to go to breakfast at Neuilly with Abbé Lépine. There are two wounded men besides me; they tell stories of the war; everybody talks to everybody else, even if not acquaintances; just read aloud the *communiqués* in the newspaper.

An old lady, very distinguished-looking, takes an interest in one of the wounded — a sort of superannuated Englishwoman who plays at being young, monopolizes

the young man, and absolutely forces him to take her place in the front seat; but the soldier is wounded in the leg and refuses to move.

A working-girl cries aloud to all the travelers: 'I have a card from my man — the first in two months — not a wound! Let him come back all whole, or else let him die...just don't let them bring him back to me a cripple!'

On the Place de l'Étoile, I change from the tram, give some directions to a lost soldier, and arrive at Porte Maillot, still all encumbered with felled trees, *chevaux-de-frise*, and scraps of trenches.

I find the abbé younger than ever. Thérèse has prepared an excellent luncheon for me: roast guinea hen, *soufflé au chocolat*, and exquisite grapes; it seems that all these are trifles in the market in Neuilly.

I go out with the abbé. He shows me at the end of rue Peyronnet the magnificent American Hospital presented to the Allies. There are nurses going and coming, wounded men stretched out on verandas in the sun.

The first thing that this Protestant society did was to build a Catholic chapel; then it grouped about the hospital a temple and a synagogue. All the sects worship together, giving to each sick man the benefit of his own religion.

We take the Underground. A lady is carefully shielding a child from the jolting. I assume that it's her own...but not at all: it belongs to a working-woman sitting at the end of the compartment. Every one speaks to his neighbor; it is a strange fraternizing of classes.

At the station there is no way of getting into the luggage-room; I have to go round by the regular entrance. At last I find my lost trunks. The abbé brings me a cab, and we start for the Austerlitz Station. There an obliging clerk ties up my untied packages, and takes me from one gate to another, for it is no small matter to transport luggage to Orléans. The abbé bids me farewell with enthusiastic en-

couragement. In Paris the zone of the armies seems a sort of hell where one risks his life at every step.

‘We have word of ninety sailors to take care of; we shall have them in three batches.’ So Madame André shouts in a stentorian voice. The bluejackets go rolling by, and laugh heartily because they feel embarrassed amid all these lovely painted women, who are so eager to wait upon them.

Madame André has evidently taken me under her patronage, for she leads me up to an officer:

‘There’s no sense in this, Commandant! We have no idea where to stow away convalescents, and here madame offers her château and no one will pay any attention to her. But there might be some use to be made of it.’

The commandant, very much a man of the world, says to me: ‘We must propose Pronleroy at once to the Health Department. I’ll give you the necessary directions.’

I ask them to point out a train that will take me back to the center of Paris. Madame André calls a soldier: ‘Look, my boy, you are to show madame the way to the station.’

‘Ah! madame, how embarrassed we are with this boy! He’s just out of a hospital; he is no longer a wounded man, and they send him to rest with his family, but his papers are not ready, so either we must find him a place for a night, or where shall we send him?’

‘There is my lodging-housekeeper who has prepared beds for some wounded, and has no one; but I cannot invite people to her place; I am only a country woman who has neither fireside nor roof at Paris ——’

‘Really? No one would think it.’

And the young non-com. casts me a glance which expresses the compliment he does not speak, as he shows me the way to the Vaugirard train; he takes my ticket and is careful about finding me a seat; I am no longer accustomed to such attentions meant for a pretty woman. I certainly

shall try to have him taken in at Madame Pobéguin's. I arrive there, escorted by my soldier-boy. He is greeted with enthusiasm; they treat him as a guest at dinner; the refugees from Châlons tell about their flight: in their case they don't think so much about the house as about saving their own skins!

Saturday, October 17

An early visit to the notary in rue Royale, to try to obtain a loan on Pronleroy; many fine words of advice to me to act through Anjou... no money!

I am obstinate enough to go to the Director-General of the Santé aux Invalides, to offer Pronleroy to him. I apply to a sentry, and an officer comes up.

'Madame, this is not the place to apply, but to the Lycée Pasteur.'

The Underground drops me close by and I go to the commissariat of the district, where I must have my passport viséed. I produce the sheet, with all the visés of the Oise and Orléans. A sour-visaged commissary shouts at me: 'This is good for nothing; you should have had it viséed on your return to the Austerlitz Station. I can't authorize you to leave Paris unless you bring me a certificate of your having lodged here.'

So I have to start all over again.

A great white façade, the Lycée, many soldiers. I enter and ask for the director of the health service.

'What is it that you want of him?'

'To offer my château for hospital service for convalecents.'

'That has nothing to do with us. Apply to Commandant Lacoste, first hall to the right.'

I wander through the corridors: they send me from one to another, until a soldier leads me to a row of benches: 'Await your turn.'

I wait an hour; officers go and come, surgeons; ladies of the Red Cross, finely clad, with high heels, silk stockings, and pearl necklaces. All this mixed with flirtatious chatter with the officers.

‘The commandant awaits you, madame...’

I enter with some little trepidation and find behind his desk a fine-looking, plump soldier, very paternal, who offers me his hand.

I explain that I belong to a military family and that in war-time I should like myself and my château to be of use.

‘That’s very well, that “being of use” — a fine phrase. Do you come from the zone of Paris — that would be simpler.’

‘No, the zone of the armies of the North.’

‘The deuce you say!’

Followed a dissertation on the Canal du Nord, which was just being built... the Boches found there, as if they had been prepared for them, the finished tools which had helped them to dig their burrow. He talks at great length and well on the subterranean war which has been in preparation; then returns to the medical side. ‘They are asking for sanitary units of from twenty to forty cots. You have a place... I shall take all the memoranda and will recommend you. You have nothing more to do than to write to the Ministry of War at Bordeaux and say what you want.’

‘What! — I — I never wrote to a Minister!’

‘Just write — here — a sheet of paper; I’ll dictate a form... I am wholly persuaded that the men would be perfectly well cared for with you, but that devilish Sanitary Commission has such mad ideas!’

He is so amiable that perhaps he will be able to tell me something about the regiment of Angers.

‘I should like very much to know where the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons is, if it can be told without risk to the national defense.’

He smiles. 'If I only knew, I would tell you, but I don't know — perhaps they will be able to tell you something on the rue de Bellechasse.'

I breakfast in haste. Madame Pobéguin draws up for me an attestation to the fact that I have passed the night with her, and am a suitable inmate of her house. Armed with this document, I return to the Commissariat and my passport is viséed. I go back once more to Madame André's; she will give me hints as to the sort of Red Cross establishment that will be required if I have to set up one for convalescents.

Madame André, being prompted by the railway officials, does her best.

'Ah! here you are! — there's a great hurry — you are going to help us!' And without hearing what I have to say, she throws me by handfuls the money with which her apron is stuffed. I count it as do the others... everybody makes piles of big sous and white pieces. I pick up between-times some sanitary hints and return to Boulevard Raspail. I attempt to lunch at Lutétia; the hotel and pastry-shop have been transformed into a hospital. I go into the Brasserie. Officers in working uniform — indeed, one sees no one else in Paris except civilians and old men and children — are lunching with fashionably dressed women. For sweets there are only *madeleines*, and crystallized sugar in little jars instead of lumps of sugar.

I return to write a letter to the Minister of War, and to write a few words to Froidefond, who is distressed about the coming of the barbarians into the Oise; and who does not receive my letters. I strap my luggage and go down to dinner — a reasonably cheerful meal with young officers on leave who do not make for melancholy. Each one gives me advice: the intendant urges me not to try to force things if the authorities of Saint-Just refuse me... many ladies like myself have been put in prison for having infringed orders!

‘The army does not want any one to know what is going on in the zone of activity, and rightly; there are so many spies who worm themselves in, in spite of everything. I myself came near being shot in the course of a supplies expedition in the direction of Creil. Sentries had been notified and the order given to fire on the first motor that should pass; luckily, the officer of the post recognized me, rode throughout the village on the running-board of the motor, shouting: “Don’t fire; it’s Lieutenant X on the business of the intendant.”’

I start just on the stroke of ten at night in an open cab — the only one — *en route* for the Gare du Nord. We seem to be wandering in a dead city — not a pedestrian, not a motor, not a lighted window. My ticket being taken, I have to wait an hour for a train on which civilians may travel to Saint-Just. I take my seat on a chain hung across the entrance to the passageway, not daring to leave my luggage. A swarm of dirty vulgar people waiting as I am.

I take my place beside two women, one with a child; just as the train pulls out, two soldiers, noisy and filthy, rush into the car smoking, spitting, eating sausage and garlic, and singing horrible songs.

‘It isn’t like that with us,’ said the light-haired work-woman, with a strong Alsatian accent.

She is going to pass the day at Amiens with her husband. The soldiers become less fault-finding and indulge in vulgar jests with the two women. They told me that one could change at Creil. I go back into an empty compartment. The train stops everywhere. One cannot hear the names of the stations, but people get down at every stop, sometimes in the middle of the fields. At Saint-Just, they back and fill without end. I reach the station...a gendarme cries, ‘No one can go out of the station.’

It is two o’clock in the morning — what am I to do? The waiting-room of the first-class is separated only by a balus-

trade waist-high from that of the third-class, which has become a guard-room, where a score of soldiers are eating, drinking, smoking, and insulting one another while playing cards. I am so fatigued that I fall asleep amid all the uproar, rolled in a cloak, and with my head resting on my valise.

Sunday, October 18

When I wake, I rub my eyes; where on earth am I? There are no longer either soldiers or travelers; I am shut in all alone, the doors locked from without. Sweeping-women arrive. I take advantage of the chance to go out and drink a cup of coffee in an obscure hotel, the only one open. On my return, a gendarme shows his surprise at seeing me there. I turn over my luggage to Narcisse, the most useful of all serving-men and go to Mass. There will be no train to La Neuville until this evening at eight; I instruct Narcisse to dispatch my luggage to La Neuville, for I am not going to drag out the whole day at Saint-Just. I start on foot for Pronleroy. I do my two kilometres boldly over the road, which is deserted save for a camp of troops at Plessier. I find Madame Mallard at the gate of Pronleroy. If she had known, she would have come to fetch me in the carriage; she takes me to old Marie, the servant who will come to me by the day; I agree that she shall begin her service to-morrow.

Luncheon sets me up a little, and I read a pile of letters that have arrived in my absence; one a very tiresome one from the nurseryman at Estrées announcing that, according to my directions in the summer, my order of fruit trees will be ready for me. I must be sure and revoke that order as soon as possible; no one can go either to get trees or plant them now. I go to the 'Tonneliers' to know if there will not be a carriage from Pronleroy to La Neuville to-morrow. Madame Zahnn is going with the Fontaines, and she will

bring back my luggage from the station. As she was starting, she said: 'There hasn't been any camp here in your absence, but we are going to have one now. All the cavalry is coming into this country; at Compiègne there are the Twenty-Fourth and the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons.'

The Twenty-Fifth Dragoons at Compiègne!!

All my memories of my worldly and holiday-making youth, in the days when it was sweet to live, passed before my eyes. The Royal-Anjou — so they called that regiment — was of especial splendor, one of the most aristocratic in the cavalry.

About 1900, the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons was in garrison at Tours. Being sent to Angers, it regarded that transfer as a disgrace, thought Anjou too far from Paris, and provincial society very different from the cosmopolitan parties of Touraine. And then, Angevin charm and grace captivated those arrogant officers. The Angevin balls, in the fine mansions of the suburbs and the city, swarmed with the white collars of the dragoons.

The receptions in the historic châteaux of the Bugeois and the Craonnais, the horse-races in the summer in the shaded parks, with the banquets in the great seigneurial manors — Serrant, La Lorie, the Lion of Angers...the hunts with the beautiful hunting outfits in the forest of Chandélais or of Vézins, with sometimes the game chased by torchlight under the centuries-old oaks... the excursions in coach or in break with four horses, the use of which was habitual in Anjou, La Sarthe, Mayenne, and La Bretagne, to meet again in the famous hippodrome of Craon... production of operas at the château of Brissac and the suppers which followed in the Salle des Gardes, lighted by hundreds of candles — all this conglomeration of worldly frivolity, rather peculiar to the West, charmed the brilliant dragoons of the finest regiment in France.

The Twenty-Fifth Dragoons, the *élite* of gallantry, of

fashion, of good-humor, whose traditions have passed from the hands of the elders to those of the younger cadets through all the revolutions; which has survived the vanished régimes, retaining the splendor of its name — the Twenty-Fifth — and all the heroism that it connotes.

Cavaliers who were first of all called Royal-Bourgogne, in the time of the wars in Flanders, of the camps haunted by princesses, visited by queens in chariots, of the times when armies were led by Le Roi Soleil, dazzling as Apollo in his golden cuirass!

Cavaliers who, under Louis le Bien-Aimé, fought at Lawfeld and Fontenoy, and among whom Lieutenant-General de Lancry de Pronleroy, when wounded, bore himself so gallantly that his estate at Pronleroy was raised to a marquise!

Cavaliers of the bodyguard who chose to fight till the last one was killed in defending their châteaux against the hordes of 'sans-culottes'!

Émigrés from Coblenz, with white or black cockades, faithful to the oath sworn to their prince; bearing the device, 'Where the King is, there is the country'! Noble cavaliers of the imperial epoch, who wielded the saber at Austerlitz, at Fuentes de Onoro, and at Mormant!

Noble cavaliers of all ages, the objects of so many feminine visions, under what enchanted colors did you not appear in the eyes of the blonde young girl that I was, when I learned to dance my first cotillion under the purple rose trees of a conservatory in those balls at Angers in 1900!

Seeing you so worldly, one would deem you frivolous. A journalist of the Left conceived the idea one day, in a venomous paragraph, of calling you 'Officers of the salon ... officers to amuse the ladies...'

The Marquis de H. took up the challenge, as he was the most brilliant leader of the cotillion; he said, striking with his white glove the penny-a-liner's cheek, that he considered

himself personally insulted, and in the course of a memorable duel three times struck the wavering sword from the scribbler's hand, disdaining to touch him.

All you, my friends, with whom my giddy youth dined and supped and danced so much and tossed serpentine balloons and confetti over the mad antics of the Carnival crowd on rue d'Alsace... your merry band is scattered now over all the countries where there is fighting, throughout all the armies in which men are struggling for victory! Leaving their fields and their furrows, some have resumed the harness of war in the infantry, others have donned the leather helmet of the aviator; but wherever you have been, you have always borne yourselves with valor.

Cavaliers of France, who in the autumn of 1914, marched to meet danger in that race to the sea, wherein the French army and the German army sought to outrun each other, you, Twenty-Fifth Dragoons, who went into the trenches of Steenstraete and Langemarck, frozen and slimy, near Dixmude, formed with your living bodies the rampart upon which the hostile waves beat themselves in vain!

Dismounted cavalymen, deprived of the *panache*, the excitement of the charge, to be entrusted with the obscure and perilous task of repairing the shortcomings and errors of others, you were sent where even the highest courage might fail, where the command must be to hold on to the death!

Cavaliers, whose citations attest their heroic exploits! You of the Twenty-Fifth, who will figure no more in the splendors of history! With a stroke of the pen your names have been stricken from the roll of the army... You, Twenty-Fifth Dragoons — admirable body of trained men and horses, of beloved leaders, of discipline freely accepted — that *esprit de corps* which made every last one of you say: 'With such officers as ours, where would we not go?'

All this has been; there remains only a name.

And some day, in a château far from the front, far from the war, an Angevine will dream of all that these words — 'The Twenty-Fifth' — will gather of memories for her... of the plume she sees at the point of a dragoon's lance, borne high aloft, bearing the red and white pennant.

Monday, October 19

Misty weather, a little cold, with gleams of sunshine which seem to give promise of a fine morning; I start for the nurseries at Estrées.

The road is deserted as far as Cressonsacq; Estrées is really a long distance; I should have done better to wait for a day when a little carter takes passengers... Ah! there are dragoons walking in the distance.

On approaching Grandvilliers, a whole swarm of horse-men; at the foot of the cavalry shadowed by great trees, a group of soldiers seems to block the road... Why, it's the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons!... I go up to them.

'Tell me, my friends, is the Third Squadron at Grandvilliers?'

'Surely — the whole regiment is there; we left Compiègne this morning.'

'And where is the Third Squadron quartered?'

'On the narrow road, at the left.'

These are officers that I know... not very handsome in their army caps, but neat and clean; Lieutenant de Chenay, Lieutenant Delacour, and others farther away; it seems very strange to meet them here, away from the salons of Angers. They smile, and so do I.

'Can I see Captain de Froidefond?'

'I will send for him, madame. He was to pay a visit in the neighborhood to-day, probably to you. The Boches haven't done too much damage to your château, have they?'

'None at all. They were in too much of a hurry to march on Paris!'

A soldier is sent to look for the captain. Still no captain. Lieutenant Delacour also joins in the search.

I inquire about my dear friend Georges de Chenay, who has remained at Angers, ill. His brother gives me very good news of him.

Hurried steps — a merry glance, a smile a bit wistful, but none the less lovely, and a handsome dragoon holds my hands, saying,

‘What a strange place to meet you, my dear lady!’

‘The luck of war!’

‘Good luck... and not to be inquisitive, what are you doing on this road?’

‘I was on my way to Estrées to clear up a misunderstanding with a tradesman... Is the regiment only passing, or are you stationed here?’

‘No one knows... we are waiting for orders. I will come to see you very soon.’

I look at him more closely: one is surprised to see an officer in war-time really alive.

‘No wounds?’

‘More lively than ever. And Pronleroy? Is everything all right? The Boches weren’t too close by?’

‘As near as this, but without doing any damage.’

Froidefond tells me the victorious tale of the early days in Belgium, the falling back on the Argonne, and in Champagne; he passes very quickly over the episode of the shell that exploded a step in front of him... shaving Gambadeur’s head and his own... the effect of fire... Just what I had thought. So many orders to be given and carried out that there was no room for fear... and then a certain idea that one is safeguarded, that death will pass to the right or left, and not over one’s self... the setting out for the front as in a dream... the impossibility of believing in reality... the idea that everything will later take care of itself... that the army will mobilize, but that there’ll be no fighting.

And we talk... and talk. So much has happened within a year! We walk to and fro through the village streets, all crowded with horses and regimental vehicles.

'I must leave you now; I am going in search of some comforts to add to your ordinary army supplies.'

'We have all that we need in the way of supplies.'

'You will let me bring you some bottles of wine and some dessert and fruit!...'

We take our leave — in a carriage this time, for greater speed; the selection of fine wines, hidden under piles of empty bottles for fear of Boche gullets, will take time.

Here we are back again at the village swathed in mist... a group of blue coats are guarding the road. I hold out a big bunch of dahlias from the basket.

'What! all them!... and flowers! I am not a pretty woman! We'll go and call Sainte-Beuve.'

An officer as pink and white as a girl comes along.

'Sainte-Beuve, here are some dahlias which you must make into a magnificent bouquet for our table.'

'The preserves we will keep for a reserve supply; with the strawberries and pears they would be too much for dessert.'

The Commandant de Maussion comes up and is presented to me; he comes to thank me for the wines.

The captain will make his call at three o'clock.

I prepare a table for tea. A familiar voice calls my name, and the captain emerges modestly from the kitchen, and kisses my hand at the foot of the stairway.

'And to think that I meant to receive you in state, through the Court of Honor and the great doorway!'

'I came in through a very fine kitchen, and I gave a heap of useful information to an excellent woman about the conscription of her son.'

'Come through the dining-room and see the salons — if unfurnished rooms can properly be so called.'

'I know the château very well from postcards; but the main entrance, the wrought-iron gateway, and the oval shape of the courtyard give a stately air to the property.'

The captain wished to inspect all the grounds... the servants' quarters... the octagonal court of the dovecotes diverted him... the old pillars of what they call the *cintres*, the remains of the cloisters of the days when Pronleroy was an abbey, about 1100, seemed of great interest to him. We returned by way of the kitchen garden and the park. The day was falling, and the mist returns. We took a breath of warmth from the fire, before leaving, then went together to see Gambadeur in his stall; Gambadeur rubbed his nose against my shoulder; then quickly to saddle, and *au revoir* till to-morrow.

October 20

Horses in the park. I lean out the window and the riders salute me.

'What, is it you, my dear captain?'

'Yes, with my lieutenant, Achille Fould, whom I present to you. We are on duty together; my squadron is at the end of the avenue yonder. We intended to camp in the village, but there was really too much beet-root — our horses would have destroyed everything... so now, a simple military promenade. You cannot come down, can you? I have something to tell you.'

'I'll throw on a cloak and come at once.'

'A strange thing has happened to us. Madame X, thinking to find her husband at Compiègne, started for that place. She arrived yesterday... missed him by twenty-four hours, and joined us this evening. We already have three or four officers in a room. What are we going to do?'

'There is no possible inn anywhere near; if this lady embarrasses you so, bring her to me.'

'I am strongly tempted to take you at your word.'

The squadron is at the end of the avenue... beautiful horses, well cared-for... still the smart regiment that I used to know!

The captain gives an order, the horsemen start up, and the two officers trot down the avenue.

During the day some echoes come to me of the appearance of the Third Squadron.

All Pronleroy was in a blue funk; to see dragoons maneuvering seemed to forebode an immediate return offensive of the enemy. We were going to see some bad times.

I leave word at the mayor's office that I will put up Captain de Froidefond; he will give me such information as he may have about the cavalry engagement at Nanteuil, where young Linger disappeared.

The captain insists on bringing Fould in through the great hall, shows him the chimney-piece with the dark blue marble columns, the woodwork of the salons, opens the library, where they browse a bit and look through the books of engravings. I propose making tea... time is passing, and we must go to the Tonneliers'.

Fould goes to fetch the horses, and we pass through the village, I in front to show the road, the two officers leading their beasts by the rein. The villagers are all at their doors, watching us pass.

I walk back between these two officers, who lean over their horses' necks to speak to me.

'What a good time we shall have at luncheon to-morrow! Maussion will do things very well... we shall have a delicious meal.'

Kissing of hands and '*au revoir*' and 'till-to-morrows' at Grandvilliers. They will send me a carriage.

Madame Zahnn, who has hidden in her kitchen because she thought the captain had not a 'proper manner,' comes out to the road and proposes to help me to prepare the bedrooms for the 'military ladies' as she calls them; she assures

me of the presence at Madame Damet's château of an old-fashioned lady's-maid.

We will put in the Directoire chamber the green velvet armchairs, and the clocks will resume their places on the mantels. We will get together the linen, make up the beds, and make a cake to serve to-night with the tea.

Dined in haste; still many things to be done: to lay a table in the dining-room, and especially to dress it with rose geraniums and purple *vignes-vierges*. I go up and down stairs a dozen times to look after the fires in the bedrooms, and that in the dining-room. I go so quickly that my candle goes out... I miss the turn and run into the corner of the hall... my nose receives the principal shock... my face is covered with blood. I call, but the door is closed and no one hears me. I go down the stairs in the darkness, and finally reach the kitchen, where Joséphine sponges me off and checks with cold water the bleeding of my nose. Luckily I am not yet dressed, for I am all splashed with blood. I don a silk dress and put powder on my still scarlet nose.

About ten o'clock I prepare tea... the stove in the dining-room roars and gives out a good heat; the long yellow curtains are drawn; the candles in the candelabra cast a cozy light upon the pretty table. I read a newspaper, then take up another... this tea will be cold! I put the water on to boil again and take a book, 'The Disaster,' and fall half asleep over it. Midnight... I begin to be annoyed... it is not worth while to announce one's coming unless one means to come! It is dark... I hear the stirring about of the night prowlers... All right... I will put on my coat and go down to the end of the avenue to take a look around, and if I see nothing, I will lock the doors and go to bed. I am not going to pass the whole night waiting... then there are some little flickering gleams, and the noise of wheels; a carriage comes through the gate surrounded by several bicycles... a noisy party who bid each other farewell in a hurry.

A very fatigued, very sleepy lieutenant presents himself and apologizes... they lost their way and have been as far as Étrennes... one of the husbands fell from his bicycle and thereupon, disaster! The regiment, being ordered away, has marched off in the night... These gentlemen will leave the château at five o'clock... they will try to send us a carriage so that the wives can overtake the squadron at breakfast tomorrow.

I offer them some tea... all these people have an exhausted, frozen look...but my tea is ready and they are thirsty... they quickly swallow the smoking liquid and nibble a biscuit. I go on ahead to show them their bedrooms and distribute the lighted candles.

'Sh! sh! You mustn't wake these people who are asleep at this hour,' said the officers, looking at the numerous doors along the hall.

'Don't worry about that! There is nobody but myself in the château.'

That seems to surprise them very much.

October 21

Up before eight o'clock to arrange the dishes for the early breakfasts of these ladies... it's a matter also of getting up a meal for noon, for we shall never overtake that marching regiment.

Madame Damet in a fine white apron, having made the rounds of the bedrooms, advises me to kill a chicken, but Joséphine, the poultry maid, has gone home at the other end of the village, and she alone knows the age of the chickens. I send Madame Damet to find her, then old Marie, and, as the chickens are still walking at the end of the path, I hurry to find Madame Zahnn, who sends some little girls, who bring back all the women. Madame Zahnn assumes the direction of the kitchen; in a moment the young chicken is killed, plucked, and put in the saucepan to be made more

tender. We shall have eggs in the shell, salad, macaroni, my yesterday's pudding masked with an apricot sauce, and a whole basket of magnificent little strawberries.

About nine o'clock I knock at the doors of the ladies' chambers. They receive me in dressing-gowns, sitting up in bed very much out of countenance, because their husbands were to send them word by a cyclist telling them how to re-join the regiment...the man must have passed very early when everything is closed and placed the letter under the door or on a window-sill...

I go down... Madame Zahnn and I explore together the outside of the château... there is no message. The ladies are dressed by this time... they will set out on foot for Grandvilliers, hoping to pick up the trail of the regiment and perhaps find letters which have been left for them.

I receive the ladies in the billiard-room by a great fire. They are decidedly pretty women, very fashionable and pleasant; they have decided to make the most of their disappointment.

'No trace of the regiment — flown away!...'

'If those gentlemen had had any desire that we should join them, they would have left some direction!...'

'They must have thought silence more polite...'

'The regiment must be beyond Montdidier...'

'Besides, the leaders scolded yesterday... some of them welcomed us coolly and said quite loud, "Too many women!"'

These ladies, who had passed through three salons to join me, are astonished to find such large rooms in a château which in the darkness had appeared to them very small. A cordial meal without ceremony, interrupted by visits to the kitchen to hurry the service. Having come from a château in Normandy, they had no idea of what a war zone could be like. All that they had seen was the departure of troops from Angers amid flowers and acclamations.

For a month every day at every hour they have expected to hear an announcement of the death of their husbands, and then, seeing that they continued to live, they concluded that in war everybody was not killed after all, and they proceeded to make plans for the future and to arrange as well as possible quarters for themselves and their families. Their husbands complained about these arrangements, especially because, after the war, the regiment would be disbanded and the garrisons changed.

The ladies decide to go to Estrées to take again the train for Compiègne and thence go to Paris. We go to the Fontaines' to hire a carriage, and I put them aboard with blankets. We part very good friends with many thanks and hopes to meet again.

October 22

With the mayor's granddaughter began soliciting contributions for the *Tricot du Combattant*. On the farms they give me five francs; in the poor quarters, one franc, fifty centimes; every one does it with a willing heart, and hands me his little piece very courteously. I thank them all warmly and am very lavish with handshakes.

October 26

We must start on our quest again for contributions... it is Saint-Just Hospital that asks help to-day for clothes for its convalescents. We ask for gifts in kind... bolts of linen, pieces of flannel, etc. Women offer their time for knitting socks for the soldiers. We must make the most of everybody's good-will.

The post has brought me a reply from the Minister of War... on paper bearing the address of 'M. G. M. de Foucault.' 'My request to be taken into consideration'... That means, in polite terms: 'Nothing will be done.'

October 27

I start for Saint-Just with M. Thomas and Madame Depaw in search of that cask of red wine which has been in transit so long. No soldiers on the road. I carry fruit to the hospital. The captain very courteously thanks me.

'Ah! if well-disposed people would give me some linen, even if it were worn or torn... we have no shirts as changes for our unfortunate wounded!'

They send a cripple who limps through the courtyard to take my basket to the carriage; the man holds forth on the war:

'The best thing of all was the Marne... five thousand motors came to pick us up. Now the army is getting together again... there are still two army corps before Roye and Lassigny. The Boches are bottled up in their northern canal, and can't get out. We shell them just to pass the time...'

October 30

Marie comes into my room at eight o'clock with my tray, and says: 'Madame, there's a soldier just come in a motor.'

I go down hurriedly and find in the dining-room the soldier in question — a general — but very simple-mannered, and pleasant.

'By telegraph, madame, M. le Ministre sends me to inspect your château... it seems to me a very beautiful place and healthful... patients would be admirably provided for here.'

Inspection of bedrooms and salons, where the officers, two in a room, would be very comfortable... the privates, with an officer to keep an eye on them, in the wings.

'But,' the general adds, 'I have orders from M. le Ministre to use only châteaux connected with the work of Madame Grefhule; and the Minister in giving me that injunction forgot only one thing — to send me the list.'

I go up to my room to fetch the papers relating to the Grefhule hospitals. On returning, I find the general at the bookshelves looking over a bulky manuscript of Saint Dominique of the eighteenth century.

'I have been indiscreet... but this beautiful binding tempted me.'

'I could offer billiards and the library to divert my convalescent officers.'

'Billiards!... very good; but you will have to keep the keys of the bookcases; otherwise the privilege would be abused.'

We shake hands, with a pleasant word about my family, whom he knows, and the Maréchal de Saint-Germain Baupré, whom he knows to be a Foucault.

November 1

Pending the Minister's decision, there is some talk of sending to me convalescents from the invaded regions, whom they don't know where to place.

Correspondence lost... letters that passed each other, misunderstandings between General Désaleux, who wanted to send all his convalescents to me... Admiral Bien-Aimé, who issues all the authorizations, and Pronleroy, which asks only to shelter them.

Owing to a misunderstanding, I have waited eight days for the gunner, Lecompte.

November 5

We start for Clermont in one of Fontaine's carriages, Madame Tonnelier, Madame Zahnn, Marie-Thérèse Fontaine, and I. We go to take the warm underclothing we have collected and bought with the money received from the collections for soldiers at the front. The gendarmerie attends to the forwarding of these parcels. The constabulary of La Neuville refused to undertake it, fearing that it might be a nuisance.

We make the trip well laden with our big bundles... we stop at Bonamy's as we drive into Clermont, and buy two dozen flannel belts... he gives us six extra, as they're for the soldiers; then we make our purchases of handkerchiefs and socks. We turn over our packages to a very friendly gendarme. Our woolens will start to-night for Boulogne. All the communes are to take part in the work as well as Pronleroy.

Meanwhile, the Boches are moving upon us again. They are again at Noyon; they have retaken Roye, but there are many French troops, and they won't let them pass.

We return in black darkness after a bit of a fright; Marie-Thérèse, seeing shadows wavering, thought that tramps were following us.

November 6

I am curious to know how Admiral Bien-Aimé's convalescents will arrive... whether they will come by way of La Neuville. I am told that a very rich woman is staying at the inn at Labau with her carriage and horses. I am going to see her. She is an old lady, very fashionable, a refugee from the Somme — Madame Versepuy... that name sounds familiar to me.

I remember... she must be the sister-in-law of Versepuy, the explorer who crossed the Sahara with Georges de Romans. Her château is in the hands of the Boches... she fled in her carriage with simply a handbag.

Sunday, November 8

They tell me that Bouchez returned at midnight... the Territorials of his class are released.

I have some wood put in the fireplaces of the left wing for the rooms of the convalescents, then I start for Mass. I see a carriage coming up the avenue full of soldiers... it is young Théron, who has found my convalescents at the sta-

tion at Saint-Just and is bringing them to me. There are three of them — Lecompte, gunner; Amasse, infantryman; and Papon, artilleryman... the latter has pleurisy and looks very ill.

We give them steaming soup, and they sit down by the stove in the kitchen. The bell for Mass keeps ringing, and the three men declare that they would like to go. The curé is just finishing his sermon. I go up the aisle to the choir, at the head of my three soldiers, who make quite an impression upon those present.

Marie busies herself in the kitchen preparing breakfast for the convalescents. We have laid their table in the small dining-room.

Germaine, the working-woman, comes from Cressonsacq to take me with her on a collecting tour... we are received, sometimes pleasantly, sometimes not; but in very poor houses they give us linen and in others they promise us work if I furnish the material.

I hurry back to Pronleroy to feed my people. I find Lecompte in the kitchen setting everything to rights and making that great lump of a Marie work. The other two soldiers, being fatigued and embarrassed, dare neither to move nor to speak, but they will improve.

Papon, who is decidedly ill, wants to go to bed. I go up into his bedroom to make his fire and put a hot brick in his bed... that amazes him beyond everything.

‘A lady so rich to nurse a common soldier like this!’

November 14

We disinter my casket at the ‘Tonneliers’... armed with a poker, a shovel, and a small crow-bar, we have first to take away the sheaves of grain. We break off the top layers of clay; Madame Tonnelier and Madame Zahnn feel about in the layer of sand, but find nothing. Can the hiding-place have been discovered? We go on digging, and at last the

poker scrapes on metal and we unearth the object: a shapeless mass with rusted joints and a coating of yellowish limestone; the chickens come to look on, and Jacqueline also, Madame Lepage's baby. M. Lepage scrapes the stony surface with a knife... the key turns in the lock. On the dining-table I spread out diamonds, emeralds, and pearls... the mountings are a little tarnished... a strange feeling to find such jewels which one thought never to see again!...

November 20

Private Lecompte, almost a neurasthenic, begins to complain... he wants to have his hand in everything connected with food, the fires, the lights, and the orders to shopkeepers; then he growls about being in a house where there isn't any service. I reply: 'My friend, if I had four servants, as I usually do, things would go on better, but you wouldn't be here; it's because I have cut out all personal expense that I can be hospitable to soldiers who have no other place to go.'

November 22

The mayor tells me that we must find something for my soldiers to do; otherwise they will pass their time drinking in the wine-shops. Amasse is a mason by trade, and we make him build up the walls of the park, the others assisting him... they work when and as they please. On Sunday we give them a small sum of money according to the work they have done.

November 27

Arrival of a second group of convalescents. I find them in the kitchen busy swallowing bowls of milk... there was one rheumatic, one bronchitic, one, Damien, wounded in the foot, who comes from Morocco. Madame Zahnn and Madame Robert, her sister-in-law from Versailles, come as

volunteer nurses; they take off the bandage from the wounded man's foot and put on a soft dressing awaiting the arrival of the surgeon. He has not been attended to since he left Marseille; the Red Cross wouldn't pay any attention to him because he wasn't in uniform.

November 28

Papon is in despair because he can't find his wife — such a pretty little blonde... he does not cease to lament, and to beg me to seek her. I write everywhere... to the prefect of Oise; to the International Postal Service at Geneva; to the hospitals at Limoges, Angers, and Nantes, which have seen so many evacuated troops pass from the North. 'About every man has lost a wife!' say the other discharged men philosophically. 'He'll find her again some day or other.'

November 30

Went to the station at five o'clock, to the train from La Neuville, to meet the cook whom Madame Bien-Aimé is sending me, but she was not there. A man in a cap was talking with some soldiers, and stories were following each other swiftly... Compiègne evacuated... long-range guns threatening the whole country... the possibility of shells striking the château at any moment... the Germans preparing to pierce the lines at Lassigny... It is defeatism in all its horror!

December 3

Lecompte, the gunner, is losing his mind; he has fought with Papon and shaken old Marie like a plum-tree. 'He can no longer stay in a hole where one hears cannon as here.'

'As for that, don't disturb yourself, Lecompte; you can go to-morrow. Madame Bien-Aimé will fill your place, any time.'

The doctor urges me to send off as early as possible such

idiots as this, who excite the others. His anger having vanished, Lecompte is very sorry at having to go away. I send to the Fontaines' to ask for a carriage. They lend Lecompte a bag to carry his luggage, which has increased strangely since his arrival; we give him cold food to take, and I will buy his ticket as far as Paris.

A hundred metres from La Neuville we see a group of women with bundles... one, in a hat with feathers and a cloak of threadbare plush, tells me that she is Madame Louise, the cook sent for the château of Pronleroy. Lecompte offers the most friendly greeting to Madame Louise, an old acquaintance of the canteen; he is in despair about going away. He bids me good-bye and thanks me with much emotion, like the good fellow that he is at bottom.

December 5

Received a visit from the little widow Duchesne. She asks me to give her lodging in one of the pavilions... she cannot find any place for herself, as she wishes to have with her her two children. She is an unfortunate creature, to be helped... she will work in the kitchen and will assist with the service when I need a maid.

December 8

The soldiers when occupied behave themselves very well, but I must find them work to do. I have them cut down a dead pear tree on the avenue and make holes to plant a row of lindens, which will be much prettier.

December 9

Since Louise has been here, the château is reorganized; my chamber floor is waxed, the kitchen well scrubbed, my service attended to. I continue to have charge of the provisions, and to distribute every day wood, coal, and groceries

... to pour out a glass of wine for each meal for the men and all the cider they want.

Amasse and his comrades have rebuilt the walls of the park, and the work is very well done. Bouchez, from jealousy, has tried to demolish it, and was instantly denounced.

On rainy days my soldiers hang the pictures and china which I have had brought out of their hiding-places, and the apartments resume their before-the-war aspect.

December 10

Madame Fontaine calls to see me on business, and says: 'There is bad news for the Tonneliers; Raymond Linger was killed in the battle of Nanteuil; don't say anything about it... they don't know it yet.'

December 11

It is decided that I shall give a Christmas tree and a luncheon on December 25. I search the attic for the box which contains all the Alsatian decorations which my piano-teacher, Webber, had sent for from Strasbourg for me when I was a little girl... angels' hair, stars, glass fruit, cherubim with golden wings.

I reorganize my life... the thought of fighting disappears... I am absorbed by the new occupations brought about by the military environment of the front.

December 13

Dismissal of Bouchez, who cannot get along with anybody whom I employ, and who plays the meanest tricks on my convalescents.

December 14

It seems that our troops have abandoned several trenches about Compiègne... it is said that the rising of the waters is

the cause of it. Guns of 420 caliber have just appeared on our front.

December 15

Trip to Saint-Just with Madame Angèle to carry clothing and linen to the hospital... had an interview with the mayor, who tried to thank me. He is very down-hearted... his son, employed in the auxiliary service, has been transferred to the active line.

'No hope that this unhappy war will end; our soldiers haven't the necessary endurance; and however little longer it lasts, it's the ruin of the country.' He adds: 'Everything looks black to me because of my son's departure.'

December 16

I am going to send some soldiers' Christmas presents... those little parcels of things to eat and trifling gifts, such as the *Écho de Paris* undertakes to send by truck to the front.

Heavy cannonade... all the convalescents are on foot, buckling their uniforms... the enemy will soon appear! Damien is tempted to strike the decisive blow, and to stop the attack all by himself, to show that a Moroccan rifleman is on the spot. At ten o'clock, when I come down again, the cannon are silent and everything is peaceful once more.

A commandant of chasseurs in camp at Moyenneville said to M. Cresne that his company of foot was in the trenches near Mareuil, and that yesterday afternoon at two o'clock, we had taken the offensive over Lassigny way.

December 20

While I was settling with M. Cresne our very complicated end-of-the-year accounts, I am told, 'There's an officer of cavalry in the avenue...'

Then Damien opens the door.

'Madame de Laboulaye is in the kitchen.'

I hurry there and join my cousin Simone and her husband at the foot of the staircase. Henri de Laboulaye's regiment is in camp at the foot of Estrées-Saint-Denis. Simone has come with another daughter of the regiment... at Paris the two ladies were told that if they had no good reason for entering the area of the war zone, the gendarmes would turn them back... they had cudged their brains and finally gave as a reason that they had come to La Neuville to see Madame Tassin, their cousin... she was the farmer who took them in... a reason which appeared far from plausible. Simone was at La Neuville and was told that to get away she must go by way of Pronleroy. She had asked if there was a château in France named Pronleroy, and was told that there was, and that a lady was living in it. She concluded that there were probably not two of that name, and had come on the chance. What a superb reason for coming into the war zone if she had known!

I offer to keep them to dinner, and to give them quarters. They decline... Simone must leave to-morrow, and has her trunks to pack. We exchange news of our relatives and friends...

December 21

We await the return of the cook, who has gone to buy things for the Christmas tree and the feast. She returns at nine-thirty in the evening on the second tram. Her journey without a pass was full of excitement; she was stopped first by the gendarmes whom she decorated with wreaths of talk; they let her pass, but she fell upon a sour-visaged post commandant, who asked her for her papers. She replied that she was Madame la Marquise de Foucault's cook, and had come to Paris to carry to the *Écho de Paris* the soldiers' Christmas gifts prepared at the château. The commandant replied that he didn't give a hang for Marquises, Christmas gifts, and châteaux, and sent her to the mayor of Saint-

Just, M. Batticle, in the custody of a soldier. M. Batticle questioned the carter who had brought her, and gave her a safe-conduct.

December 22

My Christmas tree was announced at Sunday's Mass.

Louise, for the honor of the château, insists that the occasion shall be one of pomp and ceremony, and with music ... she has secured Madame Dupérroux's phonograph, and made arrangements with the young Belgian teacher for the children to be arranged in rows. We pass our time making boxes and putting bonbons in them for the children.

December 24

We have chosen in the park a young spruce tree, and set it in a tub of polished wood in the large hall. The convalescents hang the gifts and fasten the candles to the branches.

The dining-room is prepared ... there are six tables, besides one larger one extended to its full length. Louise shows herself a fine pastry-cook; the great oven is heated with wood; one smells the hot pastry throughout the château: ten tarts, eight *brioques*, four *savarins*, and sixty small cakes are cooking.

Disagreement between the curé, who wants to bring the children from Vespers, and the teacher, who wants them to start from the school; in addition to the children of Pronleroy, the curé has invited all those of Cressonsacq, without a word to me.

Christmas Eve

Eleven o'clock ... I am stretched out on a couch, but I have not slept, I have drunk so much coffee. I have two cloaks around me ... the bells are ringing ... Amasse and Dupuy have gone to bed ... Louise brings them from their

room all dropping with sleep. We set out... Damien carries a lantern that goes out... we miss the end of the avenue and wander about in the orchard, running into all the apple trees... at a corner the lighted windows of the church serve us as a lighthouse.

Quite a number of people in the nave... children singing, in shrill voices, an old carol. The manger, very well decorated and brightly illuminated, is placed in the choir, next to my pew. The curé sings Adam's 'Christmas' to a jerky tune that varies between a military march and a polka; despite it all, the congregation is receptive to this Communion Mass.

In the darkness we start for home; then the clouds break, the stars shed a cold blue brilliance... it is a freezing night, with fields of white velvet and trees powdered with frost.

The warm, well-lighted kitchen is pleasant to the eye, with its white cloth and its great bunches of mistletoe. The pastry, chocolate, and midnight cakes await us. Louise has set my tray apart on a small table by the stove. I swallow my chocolate very quickly and leave the convalescents to their songs and the joys of Madame Dupérour's phonograph which roars patriotic airs at them.

December 25

High Mass with music for Christmas. Arrangement of tables in the dining-room, fine porcelain, wreaths of ivy, and Christmas roses. I have put on my black velvet dress, my pearl necklace, a hat with blue feathers adorned with a purple rose, all my rings, and, as it is cold despite the great fires, a cape of blue moiré de Roi. The great hall is brightly lighted, the tree, with all its lighted candles, stands at the rear; the two doors are framed with wreaths of foliage pricked with bits of color, and the whole effect is very pretty. All Pronleroy is here. The children enter in serried lines. Marguerite Mallard takes her place in front of me, a paper in her hands, and reads her compliments in a

choking voice... somebody whispers, 'Now is the time' ... Amasse hands me a sheaf of chrysanthemums tied with tricolored ribbon, from which hangs a great bag of chocolates... this is the Christmas present with which my convalescents honor me. With trembling voice, Amasse recites a charming compliment in which he assures me of the everlasting gratitude of them all. A hoarse version of the 'Marseillaise' comes out of the phonograph. It shouts, 'Vive la France!' and I assure them that the suffering of 1914 will be paid for by the happiness of the victory in 1915.

We feed the children... we give drinks and cakes to the parents... my soldiers do the honors, and Damien and Papon attend gallantly to the ladies of the village.

December 26

Damien is sick, feverish, his foot badly swollen... the wound has a bad look. I decide to take him to the hospital at Saint-Just. We start off hastily through the country, all glistening with hoar-frost.

This morning some officers passed in a motor; regiments of artillery are marching through the district, going up toward Tracy. I go to the mayor's office, hoping to find M. Batticle there; there is nobody but an ill-humored ex-secretary. When I explain that I am bringing a wounded man, a young officer who was in the room comes up to me, then goes to speak to the commandant, offers to take us to him, and gets into the carriage beside me. They take us into the waiting-room for patients. They put Damien in a seat... he was terribly frightened, but flattered to see so many people busy about him. A surgeon covered with decorations arrives... the nurses remove the bandage, and others arrive with dressings. There are ten persons in a circle gazing at Damien's foot; the surgeon searches with a probe for the piece of bone which they think is floating around in the wound. No, there is nothing there... the sub-

ject is very much run-down by life in the Colonies... bronchitis and fever come from that... dry dressing and complete repose in bed — there's your recipe.

While they were making up the remedies, I go to the mayor's office with my parcels of linen and clothing; the mayor receives me at once, although he is in conference with the commandant of the place.

I hear, 'A suspicious man... rides around on a bicycle without a pass, behind the lines of fire.'

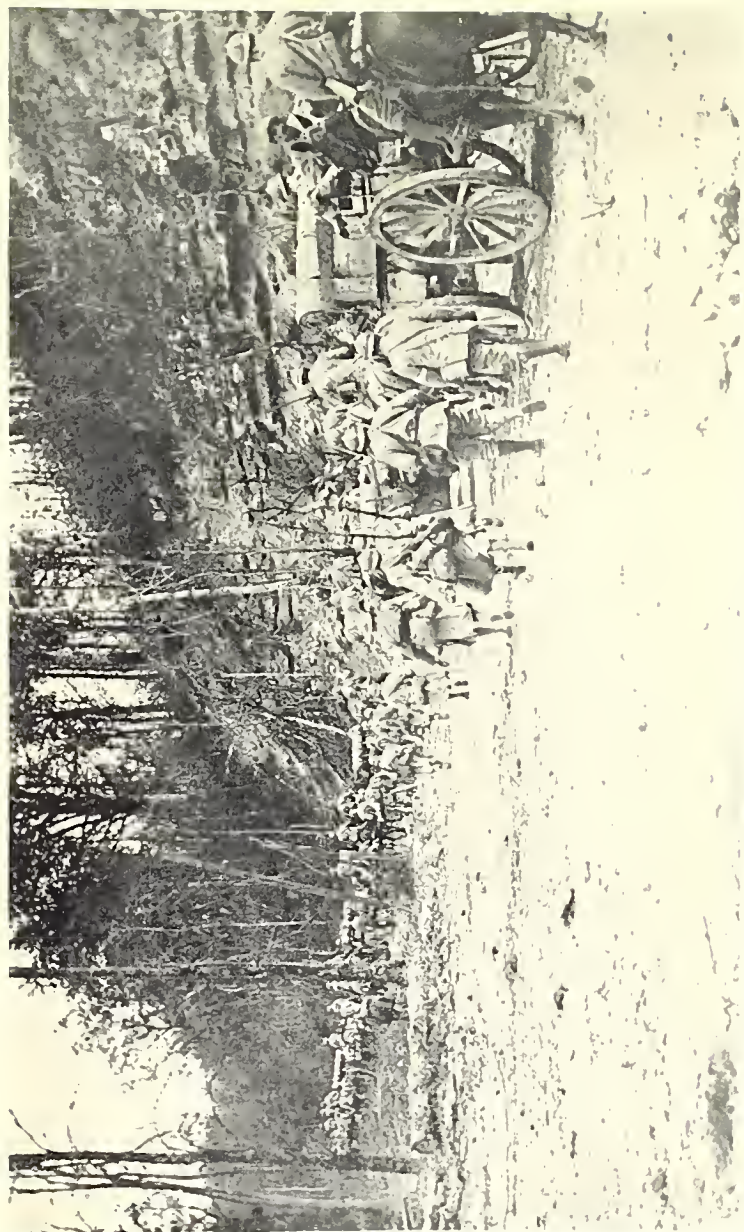
'Turn him out immediately...'

They were talking over the telephone, but were cut off... irritation of M. Batticle against the departmental administration which prefers to pay one franc fifty per day to the refugees rather than furnish work to those who ask for it by directing them to the districts which have need of hands, because it is not proper *administration* to pay attention to what is happening in neighboring regions!

I am getting information as to how to unite Dupuy with his wife, whom they have found planted at Verneuil on the Marne — another administrative piece of nonsense! My convalescent cannot have free transportation to go for his wife, but if Pronleroy can be considered as a hospital, she, on making a demand on stamped paper, can have free transportation to come to see him; the form is given to me to fill out.

On leaving the mayor's office, it is impossible to find my carriage, for the driver and Danién have gone for a drink; at last my outfit reappears. We stop at Dupont's to get the tools necessary for the plantation of the avenue... it takes a long while... all the clerks are mobilized, and the shop all topsy-turvy... the Prussians stole ten thousand francs' worth of merchandise as they went through.

When we are ready to start, the snow is falling in great flakes. The downhill drive from Saint-Just is like a slide, the horse twice near falling on his head. The snow pricks



LONGPONT, AISNE; REINFORCEMENTS ON THE WAY TO VILLERS-HÉLON

the face like needles; luckily Damien is in the back of the carriage sheltered by the hood and well wrapped up with blankets.

Gradually the storm lets up, the spotless white-robed road becomes less slippery, the snow reflects a vague light. The countryside takes on the aspect of a dead planet — an impressive silence punctuated by distant cannon shots.

December 29

Impossible to have my daughters come home during their New-Year's vacation; I am the one who must go and pass a few days at Orléans, and from there to Angers to try to get some money from my farmers and tenants.

I am in the midst of preparations for departure. The *Écho de Paris* is begging now for New-Year's gifts for the soldiers. We are preparing boxes of food which I shall take with me to Paris. With some fine pieces of silk found in the trunk-room, Germaine and Louise are making me two new gowns. To-night we shall cook pies while we finish the hemming. About midnight I go to the kitchen to see how the work is getting along... I am amazed to find Damien there lying in bed with a poultice on his foot. I induce him with difficulty to return to his room. At half-after twelve, I go down once more... Damien is there again. This time it is impossible to induce him to leave 'his cook.'

December 30

Tying up the parcels and walking through the orchard to settle upon the places for the fruit trees... found the young apple trees of La Tuilerie eaten by rabbits. Amasse will make haste to make some protective wrappings which we shall put in place to-day.

Lost the key to my trunk just as I wanted to reopen it to put in my two dresses, which are finished at last.

M. Tonnelier and Madame Zahnn will look after the château during my absence.

Damien, much embarrassed, wanders about the kitchen, not daring to bid me good-bye. I press the hands of all my soldiers and respond to their wishes for a good year. Damien ends by joining them with ill-grace. I tell him very curtly that he had better take care to arrange it so that I find his bronchitis cured on my return; otherwise he will be turned over to the hospital at Saint-Just.

The cold bites sharply... the carriage is there with the hood lowered and a hot brick under the blankets. I have followed the hunt so often in an open carriage that the drive over the frozen road does not frighten me. We meet a few soldiers leading horses by the bridle on the road to Saint-Just, and lines of requisition wagons returning empty.

At Saint-Just, the station is still under military guard; on all sides women and children surround me with letters in their hands. 'Madame, won't you put our correspondence in a box at Paris?' It's to avoid the four days' delay imposed by the army on mail from the army zone!

My trunks have been carefully weighed and are of the regulation weight — the thirty kilogrammes which must not be exceeded. The train is twenty minutes late. Louise, upon whom I relied, is forbidden to pass onto the platform to carry my numerous hand parcels. An obliging soldier undertakes to do it. All the cars are full... at last they find me a corner facing two gentlemen. The train stops, and two women are thrown at us through the door... one very pretty and dainty, the other a poor kinswoman accompanying her. The duenna steps upon the foot of my neighbor, who cries out as if she were burned; her foot is crushed.

This lady, who came to see her husband in the trenches, had had her foot caught in the barbed wire... she slept five kilometres from the Boches, almost under the cannon, near Chaulnes; she visited the French trenches... so narrow, and so damp. What a horror to pass the winter in them!

The pretty lady is almost fainting. I pass her my bottle

of smelling-salts... she thanks me heartily, and the poor relative explains that this young woman has been told of the serious wound of her husband only in the very vaguest way, and she is going the round of the hospitals to find him.

The two manufacturers from the North tell us that in the invaded departments people cross the lines fairly stuffed with correspondence, for which they are paid a very high price. A single man with plenty of decision can easily crawl between the barbed wires.

The Fourth Corps sets out this morning for a destination in the east — the Argonne or Alsace. The French troops are the most active. The Belgians, who are not as good soldiers as ours, break up into small groups. There are at this moment two hundred thousand in camps in Brittany and Normandy. They will be ready in the spring for the final offensive. These Belgians, who remember the horrors of Louvain, say that, if they enter Germany, they will not leave a living man there.

Throughout all Belgium there is a glowing admiration for King Albert and the Queen. However, the King could not exert force upon the nation; there are at most one hundred thousand Flemings against six million Francophile Walloons. Liège held out, expecting the coming of the French army. False dispatches were circulated, telling of the arrival of the French infantry, the cavalry alone having advanced that far.

In the trenches, the woman, who is returning there, tells of finding the men pallid, bloated, brutish, silent — a demoralizing life. They are well clad, well equipped... they have too many woollens and throw away bundles of them... what they need most are waterproof boots, for they are in the water up to their knees. They write a good deal... the woman carries fifty-six soldiers' letters in her valise.

I go with a box of confectionery and fruit to Madame Bien-Aimé's canteen. I am received by Madame Courcel,

a very good-looking red-head with huge solitaires in her ears, who thanks me prettily. All these dainties are for the wounded Belgians.... Poor Lecompte has gone completely mad and has been interned.

I reach rue Rousselet in time to take my place at the table at nine-thirty.

December 31

I go to visit my cousin Marie-Thérèse de Chabot; no longer is there a valet in livery, from whom to ask for Madame la Vicomtesse! Anne, a naturalized German, admits me. Marie-Thérèse sees the black side of things... her brother has been wounded twice... her son, Philip, is frantic to go (he will enlist in June). Louppy-sur-Loison, the d'Émécourt estate, is occupied by the Germans — partly burned, they think; her sister-in-law has left there all her jewelry in a walled-in closet, being so busy in removing the material for the Red Cross hospital that she did not think to take it or her engagement ring or her pearl necklace.

They speak in undertones of the fruitless offensive of La Bassée — an offensive which Parliamentary intrigues forced the High Command to order; the officers think that we may consider ourselves lucky if the war ends in October.

1915

January 1, 1915

A strange beginning of the year: Madame Pobéguin's grandson, to whom I gave some chocolate caramels yesterday, came to the dining-room door this morning to say, 'Happy New Year, madame.'

I arrive at the Orléans Station too early after all my hurrying. One never knows nowadays when the trains will start. I give some tobacco to two soldiers, hardly more than children, poor and miserable, who are going off to their families for convalescence.

A curious assemblage of shopkeepers, petty clerks, dandified French officers, Belgians, English with monumental, stylish trunks. At last, the barrier is down; no one asks me for my pass, so carefully made out by M. Tonnelier. Begging is still going on everywhere. This time I travel second-class. In my compartment are two Spaniards who are returning to Barcelona... one an old gentleman, who leaves for the dining-car... and a whole family of working-people. We pass a single Red Cross train with lowered blinds, and then the Hindu camp at Cercottes.

Arrival in the rain at Orléans... no omnibus or cab... my porter goes into the town to find one for me, and returns with a tipsy fellow who talks abundantly, but sets me down without mishap at the Hôtel d'Orléans. My room is engaged, and I rush to the dining-room in order to have my breakfast before my daughters arrive. The tables are crowded with officers of all ages and all ranks and families who have come to meet their soldiers.

With the first course come my trio... we exchange tearful greetings at once. The meal at an end, we go up to my bed-

room, where I have a good fire. My daughters take from their bags socks for the soldiers, and begin to knit; our intimacy becomes once more as affectionate and complete as if we had parted only the night before. I give some letter-paper, bonbons, and books to my daughters... they did not expect New-Year's gifts and are overjoyed.

A solitary dinner, reading the newspapers.

January 2

My daughters arrive with their work at eight o'clock, and in that modest chamber we evoke the splendors of Pronleroy. In wretched weather we take to the military hospital, the poorest in the town, dried linden.

We see a wounded man taken from a wagon... a poor human derelict wounded in the spinal column... he is bent double, his head at the height of his knees, and bending over that twisted trunk of an old man a poor tortured woman of twenty! *That...* that is the horror of war!

They take us through a room where convalescents are playing together. I put five francs in the chest for dainties for the wounded. We go away, with aching hearts.

January 4

Leave Orléans. My daughters go with me to the station. Excitement!... my porter has disappeared with my luggage... we find him at last. At Les Aubrais I change trains; train very crowded. I enter the compartment where there happens to be the unfortunate Marquise de Channalheilles, whose only child disappeared in August. She still clings to hope and will not put on mourning.

We have to alight at Saint Pierre des Corps, to wait in the open air for a military train to pass. Territorials are starting for the front... they chatter and exclaim that they are stronger than the boys of twenty... they are overflowing with confidence in victory.

Here are Saumur, and Angers — what memories! The noisy station thronged with uniforms... my porter makes me take a thousand détours to find and remove my luggage and put it in a carriage; the hospital takes up the whole square.

Arrival at the family boarding-house which the Franciscan Nuns run in their beautiful convent of Esvière; I am to have the large room of a pensioner abbé on vacation. The monastery has a novel look, all draped with flags and lanterns. Mère Marie-Émile, an Alsatian patriot who believes in victory, tells me that she has forty wounded in the clinic. The wounded have their meals in the corridor; we see beds even in the parlors. In this convent everything has become military, even the dining-room swarms with uniforms... the boarders are made up of convalescent officers who have been joined by their families... covers for thirty-five at the horse-shoe-shaped table.

January 5

The morning is taken up with business. Received at last some money, acquired some information, and settled accounts with my tradesmen. Made several family visits.

January 6

Go this morning to visit my friend La Fourcade in charge of the linen closet at Hospital No. 6. When one wants to find one's friends now, one finds them in the hospital. It is there that social life has taken refuge.

A soldier precedes me... we go up and down stairs, knock at a door, and I enter. This linen closet is a corridor lined with shelves loaded with sheets, shirts, and underclothes. I see first an abbé, who is writing at a little table, and at the rear, my pretty friend standing fixing her hair before a mirror which she has just brought. She wears deep mourning for her brother Raoul, who was killed in the war; she has

three other brothers with the colors, but as coquetry never loses its privileges, she arranges under her blue veil a lock of her black hair and long earrings of black jade which frame her face.

Marie insists on making me go through the ward of the fever patients; like every hospital it is proud of its own number, 6; it is much better kept than some of the other hospitals. Poor, helpless soldiers are lying in beds, some red-faced, others pale. My friend says a word of encouragement to some and presses the hand of the nurse. We go to the station to inquire about my train...not easy to get to La Vendée.

January 7

As the clock strikes five, in profound darkness a drowsy driver comes to fetch me, and we are off for the station. I take my seat in a frigid compartment of the little line on the road to Anjou; two employees of the company get in, then a gentleman and his grandson. After a long wait the train starts. I see once more with emotion those little valleys of Mauge which were my home in the days when I lived the life of a gentlewoman on the banks of the Loire.

Change of train at Cholet... arrival at Châtillon Saint-Aubin laden with small pieces of baggage. A gentleman with gray mustache, who is, I think, René Bazin, of the Académie Française, takes my valise and my bag. No carriage in the little deserted courtyard: I must have arrived before my letter. This is an annoyance with which I am too fatigued to struggle... the station-master sends a little boy on a bicycle to notify them at the château. I wait an hour, then a carriage appears; it is my cousin Gérard de Chabot, who has come himself, the two coachmen being mobilized. My valises are hoisted into the cart with its canvas hood, and I follow them.

I am a little surprised to find Boissière so like itself... the war has not come here... the same comforts, a domestic of

the old style at the door... Joseph — who has served thirty years and will serve this evening in a dress coat... the heater lighted, green plants in all the jardinières, the paths raked around the château. My aunt awaits me on the threshold of the salon, with her pleasant great-lady smile of older days, a little solemn, which has given her the nickname: 'The Queen.'

In the region of La Vendée they believe in victory. The men leave for the army without enthusiasm, but determined, and they are always good fighters. From an agricultural point of view the women work little... the work of the fields is not done... they will find themselves lacking forage to a disastrous degree next year. Gérard as mayor has the duty of announcing deaths at the front to the families of the commune... as soon as they see him in the street, the women begin to weep and the children to cry out, 'Here's our Monsieur again, come to say somebody's dead!'

January 8

The sun appears... I go along with Françoise, who is returning to her hospital.

A faded flag... a small door in a large new building... the hospital is installed in a college. I ask leave to visit it, and the ladies give me permission... a linen closet with beautiful shelves all filled with linen; the kitchen, a great hall with one table at the end for the nurses, another for vegetables... piles of carrots, cabbages, and potatoes, gifts from the people of the neighborhood. We go up a little staircase to a long room lighted on both sides by broad windows, with two rows of fifteen very white beds on which four soldiers are lying, the others playing cards and smoking.

Two sisters of La Sagesse, in gray with great ruffs, carry about cups of tea. The soldiers salute Françoise pleasantly, without timidity or familiarity.

A country hospital without luxury, but well kept.

Saturday, January 9

Leave Boissière at nine-thirty. I go up to Châtillon in the same compartment with an officer and his wife. We talk about the war... the husband, a country gentleman temporarily in the service, grumbles:

‘If we had had artillery, the retreat from Châtillon would not have been a rout.’

At Cholet a halt of two and a half hours... breakfast at the Hôtel de France, filled with soldiers and their families.

When it leaves, the train is taken by assault by two or three hundred soldiers who are going to pass Sunday at home; parties of them alight at every station.

At La Possonnière I stop to pay a visit to my friend Madame Planchemault; she is greatly surprised to see me; she is passing the winter in the country with her mother, Madame de Corbigny, and her sister Jollois. Colonel Jollois is on the staff of General de Contades.

Just at the time of the battle of the Marne, La Possonnière was declared to be in the army zone, and the pass system was strictly enforced. Madame's cook complains: ‘As the market is at the other end of the town from the railway line, which is under military guard, I have to get a pass, good for a single day only, every time I go to buy a carrot or a lettuce!’

I arrive at Angers at seven-thirty... dinner has been finished long ago at Esvière... they have changed my room, and my stove smokes. The sister on duty finally brings me some soup and an egg on a plate.

Sunday, January 10

Went this morning to the great Pelé grocery store to get some chicory for my convalescents' coffee. This article, manufactured in the Northern departments, is as hard to get in Angers as elsewhere.

Went early to pay my visit to the Hôtel Richou... a

little servant, very neat and correct, led me through the vestibule, the winter garden, the library, to the large Directoire salon. I find there my cousin de Kergos and her daughter Lena. Richou presents his two sisters. All are very curious to meet a person 'who has seen the Boches pass.' I am beginning to learn how to deal with the story of the invasion — the details that make an impression. My audience is interested... wants an encore.

I go to get my mail, *poste restante*. There is a little disturbance at Pronleroy, among the convalescents, but nothing serious. Louise informs me that the troops are passing, and that there will be billeting at the château... it is time for me to return.

January 11

To breakfast with Aunt de Clavières. At her house the war impairs neither the stateliness of the service nor the good quality of the food. Eggs scrambled in small silver casseroles, roast chicken, chestnuts and celery, game pie, salad, and fruit.

Arrive at the station about eleven or eleven-thirty. No waiting-room — the wounded men occupy it. We wait in the open air with a crowd of soldiers, prostitutes, and working-men who have had a little to drink and are quarrelsome. A station-man makes his round, shakes the sleepers, puts out the tramps, obligingly brings me my baggage, finds room for me in a car, crowded as the train is, beside a little *cocotte* of low degree, with her two children and the nurse, who is her mother. These people eat and jabber all night.

January 12, 6 A.M.

Rest and breakfast at rue Rousselet.

On leaving our friend's house after breakfasting, I see an airplane flying very high despite the storm.

'Is that a Taube?' I ask.

‘No — a Frenchman,’ an officer replies.

All the passers-by stand, nose in air, watching the air-plane’s struggle, almost overturned, against the storm.

I am driven to rue Auber, No. 4, where I expect to find the offices of *l’Œuvre* Grefhule, the Aid for Convalescents. It is a wrong address. I apply to an agent... he knows of no such place in the quarter. I go to the *Écho de Paris*, so pre-occupied with works of charity... the concierge sends me to the second floor; thence they send me back to the salon on the first floor. I hand in my passport... it bears only the address, Bordeaux; a secretary advises me to go to the office of General Pau, rue Blanche.

For to-day I have run about enough. I go to the Ceylan tea-room, rue Caumartin; the orchestra is still there and the Singhalese; the same women are there... only their companions are changed — they are all soldiers. I am overjoyed to hear a little music... all the tea-rooms of the great hotels are closed... one does not know where to go for a bite.

January 13

Before leaving, I go to the Ceylan tea-room. I sit at a small table with an odd couple, a young actress and a sort of æsthete with long hair, who looks like the son of a music-hall director. They talk about people ‘with manners,’ tell anecdotes of the wings, saying with a funereal air, ‘It’s enough to make you split,’ and discharge bursts of senseless laughter, for what they are saying is flat and boring.... It is about a young fellow who made an appointment with Mademoiselle X of the more or less comic *Délassements*; they are making sport of it, therefore, it must be amusing.

A rather funny interlude... a young dragoon escorting an old crane, loses his temper... other cranes, at the bar on the upper floor, have thrown orange seeds and pepper at his charmer’s head. He goes upstairs at a gallop, followed by the manager, who waves his napkin frantically!

'This sort of thing can't go on; madame's insulters must be thrown out!'

An instant later the cavalier comes down again, alone, decidedly shamefaced; there was no one on whom to vent his wrath with the ladies upstairs, who made the humblest apologies.

At dinner the man from Soissons, who is always discussing military news, announces that the Soissons affair is turning out badly — they are falling back.

Here they expect the promised raid of Zeppelins; they will arrive between one and two in the morning if they come.

April, 1915

The Easter bells... the first awakening of spring... carpets of violets and periwinkles in the park... the first dawn-colored leaves on the Japanese plum trees... the first buds of a jade green on the tall lindens of the avenue.

The return of my daughters for their vacations, with all my convalescents, and then the departure of first one and then another of these.

Among my convalescents, certain ones have recovered their wives and have gone away. Others are employed in munitions works, or they have found farm work in the country.

The lines are still stabilized above us, at Roye and Lassigny. When the wind blows, we hear the guns. Occasional excursions of airplanes overhead... we are accustomed to it... it is the war of the trenches... a contest of artillery, which may well last several months, awaiting the great summer offensive.

April 28

I have received at the château two refugees from Lassigny, MM. Lalou, father and son. The son, who is a very good gardener, is looking after the kitchen garden. He is

initiating me in the art of market-gardening. We are just setting out a bunch of artichokes when the bell indicates an arrival... I go into the house to see who it is.

Captain de Froidefond is coming up the driveway; the sun powders with gold the young foliage of the lindens, and makes the red ribbon, which gleams on the fighting man's breast, shine like a ruby.

He kisses my hand. I touch with respect the star of the brave.

'At last, you have this cross!'

'Yes. M. Poincaré handed it to me himself on Sunday at Compiègne, as well as to three others of the officers encamped at Chevière. We were embraced by the President and saluted by three Taubes whose bombs missed us.'

All the men in his squadron contributed to give him a star with diamond points, which he sent off for safe-keeping in his jewel-case, in La Vendée. There have been no casualties in the trenches at Coucy-les-Pots, where the regiment held the sector, but as soon as the captain stuck his head over the parapet, the bullets whistled about, without striking him.

He was not inclined to talk about the famous hand-to-hand fight in the trenches at Langemarck, which the citation in the Order of the Day, transcribed by the journal *L'Anjou*, brought to my knowledge:

Officer of superb courage, wounded, held for two hours the trench invaded by the enemy, and remained master of the field.

'That's too long ago... I don't remember... Maybe about six-thirty I got a piece of the parapet on my head and a bit of shell over my eyes.'

'But this trench was entered by the Germans?'

'Yes, there were some Boches, many Boches.'

'Did you kill some?'

'Oh, yes...'

'With your sword?'

'Oh, no; I had no sword; we fought with the butts of guns when the powder gave out. I lost half of my force...'

I ask for news of other officers.

Lavilléon, blown from his horse by the wind of a shell, and thrown a dozen metres away from the beast, picked himself up, grunting, 'Oh!' and remounted.

We wander about the park fragrant with the warm odor of grass and violets... we talk cheerily.

All goes well on the French front; on the other hand, in Germany famine and demoralization. There is fighting about Ypres; the war will end in October; and then will come occupation of the forts on the Rhine.

April 29

Radiant sunshine... one feels born again... the roaring of a motor so high that we can't see it.

Amasse is repairing a door and driving nails into boards with vigor.

'Well, Amasse, what are you doing? You'll smash everything!'

'Why, madame, I haven't left the door! it's a Taube that's potting at us!'

I go to the kitchen garden to see the artichokes that look very promising. I find everybody with nose in the air looking at the airplane, and just above us little round clouds — bombs. The Boche bird must have sighted the railway line at Moyenneville which is transporting our troops.

May 3

From my bedroom, I hear a sound of a horse's hoofs... I look out of my window and am greatly surprised to see a horseman. The lieutenant is even more surprised than I. I have just arranged to sell some wood to revictualling

officers, and I call out to him, to make easy the beginning of our conversation.

‘Is there anything you wish, lieutenant?’

‘I want nothing at all, madame. I thought this château was unoccupied, and this park all filled with flowers, these lilacs were so pretty that I took the liberty of coming in.’

‘You did quite right... the army is always gladly welcome at Pronleroy. Of what regiment are you?’

‘The Eighth Hussars. We have permission to ride as far as ten kilometres from our camp.’

‘Weren’t you under heavy fire yesterday?’

‘They attacked us at Lassigny; the assault was repulsed, but we had our horses saddled, and we were all ready to leave in a hurry!’

May 10

I have just had a great can of water brought to wash my hair when Marie comes running up.

‘Madame, it’s the soldiers again... there’s a soldier below.’

My hair is all down over my shoulders. I fasten it up hastily and scurry down the stairs.

A sergeant-major awaits me, very courteous, almost a man of the world.

‘Madame, I come to talk with you with some embarrassment. Could you harbor the officers of a squadron of dragoons? The regiment will arrive at once.’

‘What, is it a billet?’

The officer looked at me in surprise.

‘One would say that you are pleased.’

‘You see our rooms have been ready so long, and no one ever comes!’

‘Then you can take care of eight officers?’

‘Easily. Of what regiment?’

‘The First Dragoons.’

‘Where do you come from?’

‘Compiègne. I am going to ask you also for a dining-room for these gentlemen. The cook, who is a very good one, has all that he needs for their meals.’

I walk through the kitchen quarters so as to make sure that everything is ready; then I dress: costume of beige silk, blouse of blue batiste with white embroidery, and my little new hat with blue wings.

I go downstairs again, and find the army cook busy over the stove; he asks for a head of lettuce.

‘Take all you need.’

I go into the courtyard... the goings and comings of horsemen are beginning... wagons, soldiers running in all directions, canteens that the orderlies bring up.

I return to the main hall to await the officers, but they ride directly to the stables to put up their horses.

I fill a china jar with lilacs and place it on the dining-table with an embroidered center-piece.

Two very young, very dapper lieutenants enter first, then a third officer, who gives his name:

‘Captain Bossut.’

‘The man who rides horse-races?’

‘The same.’

They come in search of salt-cellars, a coffee-pot, table napkins... I am returning with my arms filled with heterogeneous objects, when the commandant appears.

‘Commandant Nivière.’

He is a fair, high-colored man; his salutation is very much that of a man of the world.

‘Commandant, you are very welcome in a house where one is most happy to entertain French cavalry.’

‘Madame, I cannot tell you how much I thank you. We are so touched by all that you do for us. It is so unusual to be well received — this is a great change from the way we were received at Compiègne.’

‘I think very much of the dragoons. I like to think that under the Monarchy the Foucault regiment was the crack regiment of dragoons.’

‘Then we belong, so to speak, in the same military family. I dare not, madame, offer you a seat at this patched-up breakfast, but will you do us the honor to join us at dinner to-night?’

‘With the greatest of pleasure. I will send some wine and cider for your men.’

‘Not too much — especially cider. They are Bretons, and will be delighted to drink it.’

I tell Amasse to bring twenty bottles of cider to begin with. I have sent to the dining-room a bottle of Burgundy and some preserved pears.

A young lieutenant comes running out of the kitchen and cries: ‘Thanks, madame, you are spoiling us!’

It is one o’clock when I sit down in the small dining-room to my luncheon of vermicelli and malt.

I am interrupted almost at once: they need three bottles of *vin ordinaire* — the wine for the officers has not arrived — and carafes to put it in.

This is a great embarrassment: I have but one carafe left of the old service; we must get out the antique ones of cut glass.

I go into the dining-room about two o’clock: laughter, singing, shouts, the devil’s own racket, that stops short at sight of me.

‘Messieurs, I don’t come as a kill-joy. I invade your quarters solely to show you the way to the billiard-room.’

‘Bravo! We’ll take our coffee there... you’ll drink it with us, madame?’

Exchange of cigarettes. ‘With your permission?’

‘Why, yes. I will toast one with you gladly.’

‘Who has cigarettes for the Marquise?’

‘Here, here!’

I hear Chopin divinely played.

It's the veterinary, who has planted himself at the piano; I join him there.

'What a superb instrument, madame!'

'Yes, it's an old Érard.'

They play me the ballade in G minor, and the 'Spring' of Grieg, which I adore.

One of the captains would gladly sing if I would find some music. I try to open my musical library, but I cannot... I have lost the key.

We go to and fro, from one salon to another, and walk in the park — even into the woods.

'Fine; we'll go hunting — that will amuse us in this camp!' cried the young officers. One of them takes photographs; he walks about with his kodak. I ask him to take the courtyard and the entrance pavilions.

'The châtelaine, too... that is indispensable!'

A very little wagon of grain pushed by a half-dozen dragoons jolts up to the gate and stops there.

I ask what it is.

'Forage that ought to be here already... they take their time about it.'

'The avenue's steep.'

Captain Bossut comes up.

'Oh! the poor little devils! They have their oats, but they're very heavily loaded.'

Returning to the stoop, we sit and talk war with the other officers. They are all overjoyed with the victory of Arras — a magnificent performance, four kilometres of advance on two kilometres of front.

Where are they going? Who knows? At Compiègne everybody thought they were to be shipped to Italy. Word of the probable entrance into the war of our Latin sister has just been received. There are already troops on the other side of the Alps, sent thither secretly; the period

of neutrality promised for the denunciation of the treaty between Italy and the Triple Alliance has expired. The Balkan States are going to join the Italians. The First Dragoons will probably be sent from Saint-Just *via* Lyon, the Alps, etc.

Walk with Commandant Nivière — an energetic note in his talk.

‘The troops... ours, the Bretons, fine little fellows, much activity... how they would like to use their sabers! The infantry goes along stoically... consider, madame, a regiment under fire loses half of its effectives; for us the most horrible thing is not being able to pick up our wounded, and *they* finish them. We do it ourselves sometimes... we have to get even! Yes, we are used to everything — blood and wounds. The only thing that has really shocked me has been breaking the arms of six of my comrades, so that I could force them into their coffins...’

‘And you, commandant, do you think about your own death?’

‘No; our sacrifice is made; we are all for action.’

I question him about the regiments passing through the country — at Compiègne.

‘We form a separate brigade, sent where they don’t belong... always they thrust us into affairs that turn out badly for us. Our garrisons... from Provins they hurl us down on Luçon, with the Twenty-Fourth Dragoons of Dinan, the Twenty-Fifth of Angers, the Third of Nantes, and the Sixth and Eighth of Tours; we made up a fine division at the time of the circuit of Belgium.’

I tell the story of the Mascureau Squadron of the Twenty-Fourth, which arrived one winter day in my absence, while the caretakers were away, finding everything tightly closed in this château of Pronleroy, of which poor Mascureau had been the heir with my cousin, La Vingtrie.

The commandant talks of the race to the sea.

‘When we marched upon the Yser, the German army, being in retreat, did not know what it had before it; if at that moment it had had the boldness, *it might have passed!* ... there was no infantry... they had thrown us into the trenches without ammunition, without weapons even; we fought with wooden lances — or, rather, their butts. Now we have muskets and lances of steel — lighter, and easier to handle.’

A crash of broken glass. We both look up in the air, instinctively.

No, it was the stout major, who had just slammed the door of the main hall, and the glass flew into splinters.

Exclamations, apologies; but it was the door that had closed of itself.

I walk down the avenue to inspect the gate in the wall of the courtyard, the work of Amasse and Marcel. Captain Bossut seizes the chance to turn his kodak on me. He assures me that he has taken only the château.

Labored explanations on the part of the major, who puts me through a course of strategy.

To his mind, Joffre is playing with the enemy to prevent him from taking troops from his western front. Les Éparges, Arras, le Bois d’Ailly... just maneuvers... it will be as it was at the Marne. At an early day we shall say: ‘The offensive everywhere, and the enemy can’t move his troops, since he won’t know at what point the stroke will be given; the hole will be made where Joffre shall determine.’

I go to give a last glance at the table. They ask me for another cover; there will be nine officers.

I must dress quickly. I requisition Charlotte, Marie’s niece, to fasten in the back a gown of black Chantilly over orange muslin. I will put on a guimpe of gold tulle — *décolleté* being too ceremonious — my pearl necklace, and all my rings.

Below they are playing waltzes, which are abruptly interrupted.

I go down at seven-thirty to the yellow salon, in evening dress, well rested, and if I do say it, well-looking enough, as I can tell by the glances which greet my entrance. M. Curel, machine-gun officer, is presented to me. The veterinary, who was called to L'Églantier for a sick horse, will return in the course of the meal.

Very ceremoniously the butler announces that 'Madame la Marquise is served,' and the commandant offers me his arm. 'It is the first time since the beginning of the war that I have been seated at a real dinner table,' said M. Nivière to me; 'and it is such a pleasure to handle this heavy plate. It is not as it was at Compiègne, where, in a luxurious house in which we were quartered, everything was kept under lock and key — so that, in order to eat, we had to borrow plates from the bakery opposite. They wanted to make the dragoons pay for depredations in the cellar committed by the Germans; but that didn't work.'

As the roast is brought in, a courier brings sealed orders. The commandant, having asked my permission to read them, frowns.

'Good! order to march; join up at L'Églantier with the main body of the regiment at six-fifteen southeast of Amiens.'

General disapproval... 'If only they don't send us back to Ypres!'

'We've had enough of the mud of the North!'

'Who knows, perhaps they'll send us to the shore!'

'To send us to Italy by way of the Atlantic!'

The wildest opinions fly back and forth. The commandant doesn't like it.

'Start at five-thirty!'

All the officers protest: 'Only one day in a good bed!'... and beg for six o'clock.

'I say five o'clock'... the commandant changes the time ... 'and to the minute!'

The officers had bet that they were to go toward Italy, all except the veterinary, a half-Spaniard, who carries in his pocket relics and magic prayers, which will send him straight to heaven — on condition that he is very good and never bets.

We joke about the trains 'straight to heaven.' I say that, being a papal family, the Foucaults have a special ticket — a well-rooted, though heterodox tradition.

The commandant asks leave to go before the coffee is served; he goes away with the courier, to give orders.

Return to the billiard-room: the stout major plays with different partners. On my little map, from which he discards the pins, M. Nivière draws for me a sketch of the position of the French army about Ypres.

'How we suffered in those trenches! We had neither sleeping-bags, blankets, nor warm clothing; now, when we are well equipped, the problem is to keep everything needed in the way of supplies, and to know what clothing we shall need, according to whether we go to Belgium or to Italy.'

'And the meals, commandant, you remember them?' interposed Captain Bossut.

'Yes; we ate for the first time on one day between midnight and one o'clock, during the retreat after Charleroi, when we had finally found a chicken or rabbit left on a farm. There were some roughly decent landowners — for instance, that miller with a mill full of grain that we burned; the good man said: "With or without a requisition, burn it all; I don't want the Boches to have my grain."'

They talk in undertones of a criminal affair that filled the newspapers: a husband, said to be mad, who killed his wife.

'The newspapers were discreet. Madame X had gone to Compiègne to see a soldier who was off for the front... but it wasn't her husband. She threw herself in her friend's

arms, in mid-camp, sobbing, and crying: "I don't want you to go!" The husband saw red, fired, and killed her. They acquitted him without a word, and they did well. Still, it's enough to kill Boches, without playing with the revolver in the family.'

A digression on women.

'Oh, yes! visits from lawful wives are sometimes perfectly distressing; I can say as much as that, though I am a single man,' added the captain. 'Near Sedan, the women of the regiment arrived — ten — in two motors. A Boche advance; orders to evacuate immediately. When our fair visitors attempted to take their leave, the chauffeurs, having taken fright, had gone with their cars. The regiment took to the saddle, the poor wives ran on foot after their husbands, who rode at full speed. They finally found some peasants' carts, but the hardest thing was that they couldn't get into Sedan, all the gates being closed. However, it was all arranged without any broken heads.'

The commandant and captain come to the salon to take leave, with very well-turned compliments.

I have to call Charlotte again to help me out of my gown. The party in the kitchen is numerous, and chiefly on the doorsteps, the result being that, as I go in, I run into three soldiers. There are orderlies there, and cooks, and subalterns, Charlotte playing the beauty, Amasse, and Marie. Everybody has been singing, each in his turn, and dancing, and they have had a prodigiously good time.

I sleep with only one eye closed, because I want to see the dragoons go.

May 11

Five o'clock — the noise of boots clattering down the stairs to the kitchen... the shutters creak... we hear the horses neigh — a bright, cool morning. The officers are not yet moving. They come out one by one from their rooms,

but I do not show myself, in order to avoid a second farewell. When they have gone into the dining-room, wrapped in a fur cloak I look through the window in the corridor. The horses are already lined up in a double rank along the rail of the stoop, the group of officers' mounts to the left. The subalterns, already in the saddle, ride to and fro. The commandant starts off at a gallop without looking back. The officers rush back up the stairs with a great clatter of spurs... each one has forgotten something in his room.

The lieutenants come and shake hands with me.

'How well one sleeps in those great beds!'

They all mount and the captain calls out from the courtyard, 'Thanks,' and assurances that he will come again; the veterinary kisses his hand to me very gallantly.

A young subaltern rectifies the line-up of the battalion, and shouts:

'Can't you get yourselves into line? When one talks about the horse's head, he doesn't mean his tail!...'

A dragoon is having a tussle with a big, excited, rearing mare; the horses crowd together.

'Attention! Look out! One — two!' yells the sergeant. 'Attention! Three!'

With a simultaneous movement all the men have sprung to their saddles, a turn to the left, and the horses trot gently away, in two's. We see other horsemen pass and join them at the end of the avenue. It is as precise as a figure in a quadrille. The wagons form in line along the cartroad, the ambulance with the white flag of the Red Cross, the bicyclists, the supply-wagons, the cooks carrying baskets.

A horse at a gallop... an orderly on a bicycle.

'My shako, quick!... first room, right wing!'

I point out the stairway to the orderly, who takes the wrong corridor...

This time the last horseman has disappeared.

The next thing is to put the château in order; to guide

the girl who acts as my chambermaid through the chaos of apartments all so perfumed. One of the officers has forgotten and left behind a bottle of perfume, another a tooth-brush; somewhere else a novel is lying about — nothing important, to be sure, except sundry packages of cartridges which are brought to me from the servants' quarters.

June 3

Visit from the curé, who wishes me to set up an altar at the château for Corpus Christi Day.

My two remaining convalescents have been before an examining board at Saint-Just. Amasse returns at four o'clock very much demoralized. He has been declared 'fit for service.' Hubert has a definitive discharge, not as a sick man, but, according to the new law, as the father of seven children. Amasse sees a conspiracy in his case... traitors all about him; M. Lalou, blacker than the devil, and Charlotte's husband, and young Marcel — they have a long arm; in short, they have influenced the surgeon.

I cut short this idiotic folly, and Amasse bursts out sobbing like a child.

June 5

Marie, at seven o'clock, informs me that Amasse has been taken again with the vomiting of blood, which worried us so last winter; it annoys me that the fear of going to the front should be the cause of the relapse. However, I go to see my invalid; he seems to be suffering a good deal and is twisting about in his bed.

I go to the mayor for advice, as I have nobody to send to Saint-Just for the surgeon; neither Hubert nor the Lalous, with whom he is at swords' points, are willing to put themselves out for Amasse. M. Tonnelier tells me to write a letter to the surgeon of the dragoons encamped at Montiers, and agrees to have it sent to him.

I put Amasse on a diet, and we cover him with compresses of hot water, which calm him a little.

At three o'clock I hear a horse's gallop in the courtyard, and a young officer, very elegant, presents himself: surgeon of the Fifteenth Dragoons (from Bordeaux); he tells me that he has just been handed my letter and that he has hastened to look after the patient. I explain the case to him as we go upstairs.

He cries out, 'How are you, old man?' very gayly to Amasse; he is escorted by a great Saint Bernard, a sanitary department dog which has succored many wounded men on the battlefield.

He examines Amasse thoroughly and goes downstairs to write his prescription in the dining-room; he cuts in half very carefully the sheet of paper that I hand him; he assures me that the poor devil is no malingerer.

'How could they ever have sent that man up for re-examination? The surgeon can't have taken time to examine him. He's a very sick man... lungs threatened, an extensive wound, probably cancerous, in the stomach. Leave him in bed, nurse him carefully. I'll write to the military authorities what I have found.'

The surgeon would accept no refreshment... he had to go and eat in the village with a companion.

At La Neuville, where I go for medicines for Amasse, I find everybody in a state of excitement. An airplane, it seems, has fallen beside the Pennelier factory. They fetch the druggist from his kitchen garden, where he was digging; he is not anxious to put up the prescription at once; he assures me that it will take a long time. I go to the painter Berrier to select a paper for Denyse's room which Amasse is doing over. There is nobody there except the young daughter; they have had no word from her brother since April 12. A comrade saw him fall at Épargès, seriously wounded. Gabrielle gives me a letter to read from the

lieutenant-colonel, writing that they do not know where Berrier was sent. I suggest applying to the hospital center at Angers, to try to get on his track.

An airplane appears in the sky; it is the one which they thought had fallen, but which had simply landed.

On returning home I find Amasse up and in the kitchen. He was bored all by himself. With difficulty I make him go back to bed and begin to administer from hour to hour the quieting remedies.

June 9

It seems that the Fifteenth Dragoons started last night for the line of fire... a strong attack in the direction of Lassigny.

June 10

Soldiers going and coming. A sergeant arrives to buy hay; he says that it is very good; he will take several wagon-loads. Another sergeant, very fair and quite young, comes for wood; we go to the park to look over what has been cut down. It is very warm; I have drinks served to them, for which they thank me heartily; they belong to the Twenty-Third Dragoons.

June 11

About seven o'clock horsemen and carts arrive; the men are grumbling:

'We have made eleven kilometres hunting for wood where there ain't any.'

They had come away without eating. We have them served with coffee, bread, cheese, and a pint of wine, and lo! they are in a delightful humor. We give them saws; they cut down some trees and load them on the wagons.

At eleven o'clock a storm threatens. Everybody goes to work on the hay... the soldiers lend a hand; little Mathilde

and I rake also; the hay is in great stacks when the flood of rain drenches us.

June 12

Madame Zahnn comes to tell me that the officers of the Fifteenth Dragoons, returning from the trenches, will come to tea with us on Tuesday, and will bring a man from Anjou, a former admirer. They think that it will give me pleasure to see him again.

What sort of man am I to meet again — a companion of the good or evil days of old?

June 14

To-day a bomb was dropped by a plane on the station at Compiègne; we heard the explosion here.

At three o'clock the surgeon rides up, at full speed, followed by his orderly and his Saint Bernard leaping by his side — come to see his patient. We search for him everywhere. Amasse has gone into the woods to repair the wire fences. We have a long wait... the surgeon knocks the billiard-balls about. We serve him curaçao and iced water. He speaks of his colonel, M. de Puyneuf, formerly Deputy from La Vendée, neighbor of the Chabots. He complains of the food for the troops — the men have mouldy bread and meat that's too fat... Amasse returns... thorough examination... the wound is cicatrizing, and the patient is much better.

June 15

It seems that we are going to have some troops billeted on us... cavalry at La Neuville and infantry here, because of the shortage of water.

Germaine informs me that the surgeon will come to tea to-morrow.

June 17

I have prepared a dainty tea, with many flowers, in the dining-room.

At three o'clock, I put on a light foulard dress, with a large hat with ribbons and wreaths of tea roses.

The little girls from the school come to gather linden blossoms. I cover my fine gown with an apron and cut the flowers with them and tell them stories.

At four o'clock Amasse informs me that there are people on the porch. I find at the entrance to the main hall Madame Zahnn with her mysterious lieutenant... he is absolutely unknown to me, very much the dandy, a light blue uniform quite new, patent-leather shoes, brilliant helmet, white gloves — full dress.

We go through the salons, and stop before the pictures and sheaves of sabers, in the main hall. He reads on one of the blades, 'Given by the King,' and blurts out:

'It goes without saying, madame, that you are a Royalist?'

'With all my heart and by tradition... as a descendant of Vendéan leaders may well be! Many men have died for the King in my family.'

The lieutenant — a Royalist, too — spoke at length, content to express himself with a fine southern fervor, to dwell upon his monarchical inclinations. That is why he wanted to come into a château... because there he would be understood. He continued:

'Do you think that the flight of the Government before the enemy is calculated to inspire a love for the Republic? At Bordeaux the step has been taken very ill; the Ministers arrived by special trains, interrupting all military traffic when the *communiqués* were denying the invasion of the territory and reiterating the phrase: "All goes well, position unchanged." We were wondering what all those dastards had come to our town for; and then they told us in

a lump of the defeat at Charleroi and the formidable march upon Paris.

'Then it was that one could see, while tens of thousands of honest bumpkins were submitting to be killed in defense of our own land, automobiles requisitioned in Médoc driving about the "little friends" of these members of the Government. There was an inn near Saint Émilion, where Ministers took their wives and daughters to breakfast — simple little menus; they talked only of restrictions. But when night came, with lovely damsels brought from Paris — what a feasting!'

'Madame Poincaré alone maintained a proper attitude; she was to be seen in a light robe with furs in a magnificent victoria drawn by two golden sorrels, all very pretty and very stylish.'

Madame Zahnn suggests a stroll in the park; we come to the rows of benches facing toward Cressonsacq, where Hubert, who was supposed to be fading away, was stretched sleeping the sleep of the just. The lieutenant is speaking now of the Boches:

'They are overflowing with munitions and arms, and with regulations... they have no reason to fear famine.'

'But in that case this war... will it never come to an end?'

'We shall get them... with great difficulty... because the French are magnificent soldiers and also because all Europe is against them; but they are terribly strong.'

It is late, nearly seven o'clock; the lieutenant talks all the time. Kissing of hands, many thanks, and Sunday he will take us to Montlivaux for tea.

Sunday, June 20

The dragoons of Montiers, always active, have started again for the front; at night the lieutenant came to say good-bye to me.

June 22

A chicken in the midst of many roosters—Charlotte—has caused dissension amongst the convalescents, the exiles, and my employees. There are accusations, denunciations, anonymous letters, the Devil and his whole crew; I must try to find out who are the trouble-makers and turn them out, in order to have peace.

June 27

Madame Dupérourx asks leave for the officers whose wives have joined them to walk in the park. Like a shrewd business woman she is preparing for them dainty dinners with white napkins and decorated tables, but the days in the dining-room of the inn with the brawlings of the soldiers seem long to these ladies.

A visit from Lieutenant Girard, a civil engineer at Montluçon, from another more fashionable household... the Pasquements... the husband gives his own name and presents his wife. I offer them the salon in case of rain, and tea at four o'clock.

'The war took us by surprise at Deauville,' said Girard; 'our colonel told us before starting from Moulins, "This is going to be just a military promenade of a couple of months," and here it has lasted eleven months! I had left my wife a sum of money which I thought sufficient; she has run into debt, and she will run into more.'

He looks at her very amorously and continues: 'We shall have a winter campaign. Not only has the offensive been held up in the direction of Arras, but we have fallen back. Joffre acts as if he believed in a trap in that direction, and there are twenty regiments of cavalry which are still waiting to be thrown into the hole, when they consider the time favorable.'

'We shall succeed when the Balkan States get under way.'

'Ah! those poisonous Balkan States!... One of the great blunders of the campaign. We have made maneuvers which were known to be false from a military standpoint, because of the neutrals, to draw in the Roumanians... the affair of the Dardanelles among others...'

'And the Russians, these Russians whose every repulse is given out as a victory by the *communiqués*...?'

'They have no arms; we have seen regiments that had only clubs to hold their own against Prussian infantry!'

The captain is in camp at Ellencourt; he must go back at six o'clock; he is not allowed to be away from his camp, but his lieutenant has made without hindrance conjugal visits at Pronleroy at Madame Dupérour's friendly inn. He has tried to get a little enjoyment.

June 29

'Madame, a soldier is here to arrange for a hospital.'

'I'll go, Marie. Who is he?'

I find him in the dining-room; a stout, fair-haired surgeon, dripping with sweat; he looks like a curly-haired dog just out of a bath. He explains that the hospital at Orvilliers Sorel, established at the Baronne de Segonzac's, is fairly sprinkled with shells; they are going to move it and to withdraw several hospitals from the front; they are seeking places to put them, and he has just come from the château of Montiers, which is falling into ruin. It is necessary to find room for one hundred and fifty beds for wounded, sixty nurses, six doctors, officers, a nun, motors, and horses. They will pay four sous a day per square metre and one franc for each officer's room.

'I have inspected the wings and the servants' quarters of your château. On the ground floor there would be the sterilization rooms. We furnish the beds and the linen, whiten the walls, put in electricity. As for the heating with the grates and the coal, we will arrange for that. We must

count upon a winter campaign. Would you allow the wounded to walk in your park, madame?’

‘That goes without saying.’

‘Not so much as you think. At Orvilliers there is a little bit of a space surrounded by iron wire where I can let my convalescents take the air.’

The surgeon draws a plan of the quarters... takes notes... promises a second visit very soon. I explain that I do not want patients with contagious diseases, because of the coming of my daughters on vacation.

July 18

Visit to the ‘Tonneliers’. All Pronleroy is excited by the expected establishment of this hospital. Madame Zahn takes me aside to show me a very much too friendly letter from the tenor Frantz, of the Opera, who, after visiting the Tonneliers, invites the young woman to come and see him at his camp; he has hired a quiet little house where he can receive guests.

Life in the trenches, so monotonous and so boresome, makes the soldiers very amorous and very devout... I do not understand very well how they reconcile the two, but they do.

It seems that many women who want to come into the army zone to see their husbands have done so under their maiden names; they would pass for a ‘little friend,’ whom the military authorities can make a pretense of ignoring; and, says Madame Dupérour, they sell at Compiègne silk chemises for eighty francs! That’s a price!

July 22

Great preparations at the château to receive my daughters; Denyse’s bedroom in the alcove is finished; the paper laid, the curtains hung; there are clouds of dust and odors of turpentine. Amasse and Marcel have spread such a coat

of encaustic on the floor that it has become cherry red; washing with water has not removed the red, and they are rubbing it with potash; they are waxing the bedroom floors, and all the furniture is put out in the corridor for this wonder-working cleaning.

Marie shouts the traditional phrase: 'It's a soldier!'

The soldier is a surgeon, who salutes.

'Madame, I have come about the hospital...'

'Ah, yes, you have come to make arrangements about the installation?'

'Why, no, madame. I have come to prepare the lodgings; the hospital arrives in half an hour.'

'What! you are bringing me one hundred and fifty wounded in half an hour?'

'We do not understand each other, madame; there are no wounded; it is the medical staff of a hospital which has been given up: eight surgeons, a few orderlies and nurses; we ask hospitality for one night.'

I show him the rooms. Amasse and Marcel have taken out still more furniture... the encaustic clings to the feet in the apartments... the keys are lost in the hurly-burly of the corridor.

Nevertheless we find eight rooms. The carriages enter the courtyard. I go down to welcome the surgeons and open the main hall to them... they do not want to come in... they are in a bucolic humor and sit down on the grass in the shade of the lindens. I meet a bearded surgeon, who is pressing on the nun an apron, the largest he has been able to find. I ask him if he has any news of the hospital at Montprofit. He has met the surgeon in charge and will see him again; he will give my kind remembrances to him.

I am going hither and yon distributing linen to the orderlies, when I encounter in the chaos of the corridors a new arrival whose motor has just stopped at the steps. A tall blond lieutenant, a very nice-looking boy, very stylish,

in a horizon-blue uniform, fawn-colored boots, and red armlets; he wears the number '25' on the tab of his collar.

'Madame,' he says, 'I have come to find lodgings for a staff; they sent us to Lieuvillers, where it was impossible for us to find a place. I come to ask you if you will be good enough to take us in?'

'The fact is that I already have eight surgeons and their impedimenta...'

'Oh, not this evening! and to-morrow the surgeons will have gone...'

'You are of the Twenty-Fifth?' I ask. I don't recognize the new uniform at all...

'Twenty-Fifth Dragoons, of the staff of General Lefèvre, Eighteenth Division of Infantry, Ninth Corps.'

'The Twenty-Fifth... not of the active...?'

'Yes, but detached. At this moment, madame, there are great movements among the troops, and if you don't take us in, they will send you some other regiment, no matter what one, of people less well-behaved than we... you will risk having everything in this lovely place ruined. My general is a charming man; I am very fond of him and desire to provide him with pleasant lodgings. On his staff there are Colonel de Boisanger, Commandant Becdelièvre, La Ville le Roux, Thierry, Lambert, and Ribot, all men of the world; they will give the châtelaine the least possible annoyance. The general would like to receive. He would require a dining-room, a salon, an office... you must find me very exacting, madame...'

All this was said with absolute courtesy. Meantime, while visiting salon and bedrooms, we had spoken of Colonel de Foucault, whose sister is related to the officer, and whom he knew at the beginning of his service; Fitz-James, where the staff of the army corps of Robert de Fitz-James, his comrade, is encamped. He slides over the fact that in his family they possess a very grand estate of the Pronleroy

epoch, and that it gives him real pleasure to find himself again in the country, in a real château.

I tell him that, as my daughters are just arriving, I can give him only three rooms on the front; the officers would have to be content with rooms in the wings.

'Why, we shall be perfectly comfortable there. We are not accustomed to such quarters. You have servants' quarters and stables?'

'For thirty horses.'

'The deuce! and a separate kitchen?'

'Yes, but without an oven. You can get one at Saint-Just.'

He shows his appreciation, thanks me, and goes away.

Some one has learned from the chauffeur that his name is Lieutenant Balsan.

Then I meet the tall blond surgeon. The dining-room seems to him too imposing; he wants a small, simple room, without show. Having to carry tables and chairs into an anomalous place will be a nuisance, but I offer him the small dining-room, which he accepts with enthusiasm.

At this moment, Madame Zahnn arrives to see what is going on, and offers her services. It is said in the village that the hospital has come, and that the one hundred and fifty wounded are quartered in the sheds of the Fontaine farm.

I have Germaine take my table service into the large dining-room and set up my modest menu there.

A surgeon comes to ask me for some iodine — that's piling it on!... to be sure, there is a druggist's van in the courtyard, but it is locked, and nobody knows where the key is.

From the village comes an urgent call for a doctor, but I am just sending the surgeons into their dining-room... they dine in almost complete darkness because there is a slim crescent moon in the sky and they all want to enjoy the moonlight. One of them goes to visit the sick man. It's an

attack of angina, presumably diphtheritic; the surgeon will make an injection of serum if there is any in the supply wagon; of course there isn't any! The surgeon admits that they never know what they have in the way of remedies; he raves against the stupendous mobilization of physicians which has emptied the country districts of all medical aid and caused an unprecedented mortality among women in childbirth and among children. He prescribes compresses of boiling water and garglings of lemon juice... to prescribe something.

July 23

The surgeons go away at five o'clock, leaving a card of thanks signed by them all.

At nine I am in a light dress, with a dainty lingerie blouse, attending to the preparation of the château — a day of suspense... the staff does not come any more than does the hospital from Orvilliers.

July 24

At six in the morning, Marie wakes me with a shout:

'It's a soldier — about quarters.'

I close my eyes again and reply testily.

'Tell him that he's too early; tell him to come again at a more suitable hour. I will let him have a lodging, and I will come to an agreement with his officers.'

Marie rushes up again, all out of breath:

'This soldier! He's a captain! He wants to see madame at once.'

I go down and find a bulky infantry captain, all tangled up in his words. We must give him lodgings for twenty officers; he doesn't know whether it's for a stay of one night, or for a fortnight. I tell him that there has been some talk about a hospital staff coming, show him the rooms in the wings, and he draws a plan of the rooms.

As we pass along the corridor, I notice two automobiles in the courtyard; I open a window and ask whose they are.

‘Staff — Eighteenth Division.’

I go into the ground floor of the right wing; Lieutenant Balsan, always neat and perfumed, is in the act of unpacking some casseroles, while three soldiers are setting up the pipes of a cooking oven.

‘But I have already a whole regiment of infantry to take care of!...’

‘I have made them clear out; don’t be disturbed; you will have only the staff and the assistants in the château.’

I ask for some help to get ready the eight rooms in the right wing. M. Balsan said to me: ‘Here are two men whom I have brought here for that purpose.’

They move the beds; they bring down some from the attic and which are covered with dust; they tumble in the toilet tables haphazard; they move chairs and armchairs. It is said that the furniture of Pronleroy will always waltz from one end of the château to the other.

Two, then six motors come, filled with officers, with sub-alterns, with secretaries, and with baggage. They ask for more furniture. Three soldiers lay telephone wires at the end of long poles, passing the wires over the doors and through the windows. In half an hour signs are pasted on all the doors: billiard-room — officers’ room; fruit-room — secretary’s office; the little hall — telephone office. The sub-alterns ask me for bedrooms, and an orderly comes running after me — they have forgotten to give his lieutenant a room.

I go back to the group of officers in the courtyard and show them into the main hall. I send a basket of flowers for the general’s table and wine to drink with his dessert. A motor starts off with Balsan to get the general at Clermont. Much going to and fro of carriages... all horses led by hand pass through the courtyard; then, arrival of the escort and the ammunition and forage wagons.

Madame Dupérourx sends word to me that amid all this coming of soldiers it will be impossible to leave her shop to go for my daughters, who arrive at three o'clock on the train from Saint-Just.

One of the officers hears this and promises that Balsan, as soon as he returns, will put the horse and carriage at my disposal.

No officer wishes to select his room on the front; the general is capricious. If an apartment is selected for him, he is certain to want some other.

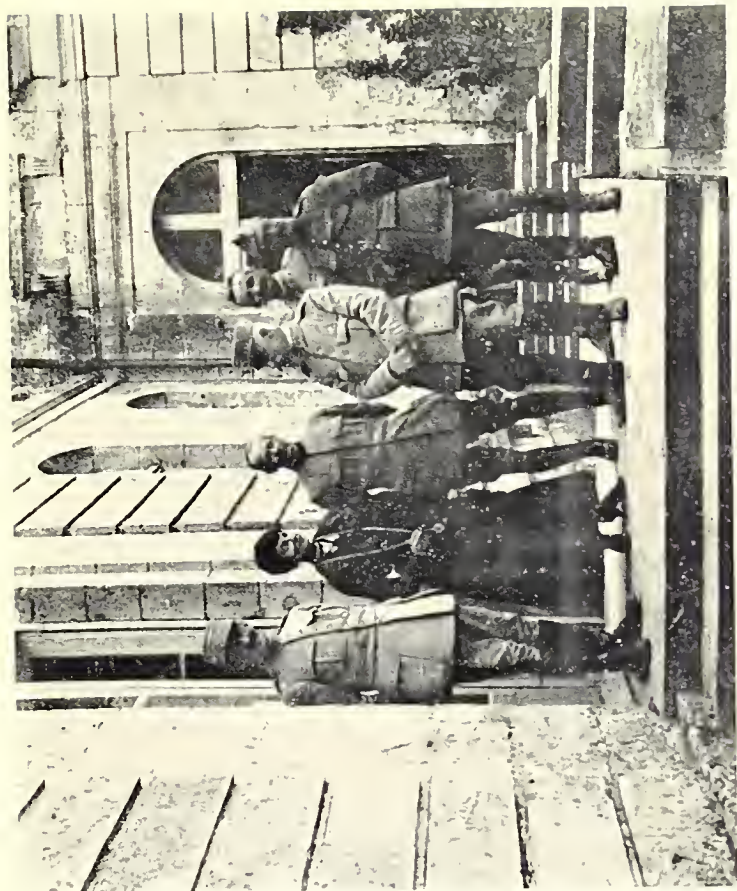
Immediately after breakfast I arrange for sending the carriage to Saint-Just; they have given me a horse and harness and a victoria. I pile in blankets, for the weather's threatening. Amasse drives the vehicle. I order a kilogramme of butter, for it is impossible to get any here.

Balsan comes for me; the general wishes to be presented. I return and meet General Lefèvre, very straight and slender, young in looks, with refined features, and the easy bearing of a man of the world. He thanks me for my hospitable welcome, wishes he could remain longer in such an abode; he had come to take command at Angers of the Eighteenth Division, when the war broke out. I meet also Captain de Becdelièvre, who speaks of Nantes, of Angers, where he has relatives, and of Colonel de Foucault — an officer of rare intelligence.

Wind and rain; after luncheon I have made ready the bedrooms for my two daughters; I shall have to find a third room.

I catch sight of the carriage in the driveway and go down; two of my girls have already come out from under the dripping hood; Mademoiselle Delahaye, their former governess, and Denyse emerge from the pile of valises.

The journey has not been without adventures. The gendarmes of Saint-Just did not want to let any of them pass except Mademoiselle Delahaye, whose papers were in



AT THE DOOR OF THE CHÂTEAU

order. Simone had appealed to the lieutenant of the guard, but he did not choose to put himself out; to M. Batticle, the mayor, the gendarmes declaring that there was nothing to prove that the victoria really came from Pronleroy; then suddenly they said, 'Go on all the same; we'll keep this young Victor, who hasn't any paper.'

A farm-boy from the Thomases' had to go in person and rescue him at Saint-Just.

Denyse is delighted with her room; Suzanne resumed her usual quarters, but without the tables, which had been moved into the improvised offices for the staff.

Mademoiselle Delahaye installed herself in the room called the 'chamber of the new arrival.' We put a folding bed in the alcove for Simone.

After dinner we took a walk in the park, then we gave out linen to the orderlies, set up the cooks' and the servants' quarters in the wing which I had reserved. We barricaded mademoiselle's door with wedges and pieces of wire on the side where there was no lock, so that she might be secure from any intrusion by the soldiers.

We are so flustered to see Pronleroy transformed into barracks that we forget to kiss each other good-night.

July 25

Cold and rainy weather; my daughters go to Mass in traveling costume; their trunks have not yet come. I wear my new tailor-made serge and my hat trimmed with cherry geraniums. I have the pew opposite my own reserved for the officers. Only four of them came, the others having gone to service at Cressonsacq. The Mass was said by a stretcher-bearer in uniform under a surplice. On our return we are accosted by a young subaltern; he would like to borrow from us a violin to play at Vespers this evening, but I don't own one, having only a collection of ancient copper instruments. He is of the Thirty-Second Infantry, a regiment which has

always served with that of François Delahaye, brother of mademoiselle. The Eighteenth Division is one of those recruited in Anjou; Mademoiselle Delahaye, who lives at Angers, is rejoiced to have news of her brother.

Rain and tempest; impossible to go out. We rummage through the attics to find furniture for the room where Mademoiselle and Simone are camped. At six-thirty the bugle for morning prayer is sounded. I do not know whether it is the military atmosphere that has disturbed our Belgian curate, but he reads one after another the most extraordinary Psalms and the least appropriate Litany. The stretcher-bearer sings a military canticle in a very beautiful voice.

July 26

The storm and floods of rain continue... a handsome subaltern from the office begs for a corner to sleep in. I take him to the small room behind the Rose Salon, through the labyrinth of hidden corridors.

M. Balsan comes to ask me what kind of work I wish him to give the laborers in the park. I ask him to have them fix the paths. Two wagons arrive with spades and rakes.

M. de Becdelièvre hands me a letter from M. de Grandmaison, the Deputy for Maine-et-Loire, captain in the postal service of the Eighteenth Division. He says that, as an old Angevin friend, he is coming over one of these days to present his respects.

July 27

The general announces that there will be a dinner-party this evening, and invites us to join them on the occasion; there will be music. My daughters busy themselves supplying flowers, damask, and extra glasses. We take from their hiding-places the ornaments and gewgaws which we have kept there since before the coming of the Boches. Orderlies

rub the floors vigorously; they polish with great earnestness whatever falls under their hands; no ancient gilding can stand up under their efforts.

My daughters have put on their embroidered linen dresses. I, my blue foulard with lace collar and a few jewels. We light with many candles the main drawing-room.

The cigars finished, the general opens the doors of the main hall, and presents to me half a score of officers; two colonels, several commandants, the staff of the *intendance*, and a young lieutenant, M. de Chaponay, the only name that means anything to me.

There is a call for the pianist, the sub-intendant Lambert Ribot; he plays with remarkable skill, first, Chopin, then a waltz.

The general comes up to me.

'This dance, madame... will you do me the honor to take a turn with me?'

I protest. I no longer know how... hesitating to waltz with one unknown to me.

'We will dance a good old-fashioned waltz...'

The general dances very well. My daughters dance with the young lieutenants, who are very attentive.

July 28

Mademoiselle Delahaye while crossing the courtyard is accosted by a cavalryman at whom we gaze with some astonishment; he is an abbé, very eighteenth-century in appearance, with his boots, his short soutane, and military cap set jauntily on his ear.

'Why, what are you doing in a camp at the front, Mademoiselle Delahaye?'

'Monsieur l'Abbé Ballu... from Angers!'

One is as much surprised as the other.

'Ah... I,' said the abbé... 'I am the division chaplain.'

‘And I — I am living among my former pupils.’

‘Good... as you know something about this château, can you show me where the staff offices are?’

‘There, through the door at the right.’

The morning passed in hanging the great embroidered shades in the salon. After breakfast and a walk, I encounter the surgeon, to whom I commend Amasse; he will examine him carefully and will give him a line so that, on his return to the regiment, the health service will be fully informed as to his condition.

July 29

I send to ask M. Balsan to secure me a vehicle to go to La Neuville, where I wish to buy some plain furniture for the officers’ rooms. The orderly says that the lieutenant has gone away on leave. I speak of the matter to Commandant de Becdelièvre. He regrets that he cannot put one of the motors at my disposal; it is officially forbidden.

Then I set Marcel to planting and cutting stalks of beans. Suzanne and I set out stakes and run lines to hang sweet peas in festoons.

A subaltern comes from the general to ask at what hour I want a carriage. I say at four-thirty.

Denyse, Mademoiselle Delahaye, and I start in a pretty little carriage. We travel at good speed with an excellent mare, driven by a quartermaster of the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons, who is a ‘monsieur’; we talk, and as I have heard him called Cloquemin, I ask him if he lives at Le Bougeais.

‘Why, yes, my people own Jarzé...’

‘How we keep meeting people that we know about!...’

Our driver is one of our successors in the Marquisate of Jarzé, which belonged to my great-grandfather. I remind him that I met his mother and sisters at the Montprofit hospital at Angers.

On entering La Neuville, we meet one of the Thirty-Second; Mademoiselle Delahaye inquires about the hospital attendant Daulay, her brother's friend. We set off in search of him, still driven at a good rate by Cloquemin; we go to the hospital, the school, and the church. We meet Daulay coming out of the choir.

At Lesobre's the refugees passing through have bought everything; he refuses to sell me some second-hand chairs in his shop. At last I succeed in buying some coat-hangers, lamp-chimneys, and a table. Meet Mademoiselle Delahaye and her seminarist soldier. He has a very embarrassed manner.

M. Cloquemin belonged to the rank and file of the Twenty-Fifth Dragoons; he induced his friend M. Balsan to have him attached to the staff; he is the general's chauffeur; without much shelter when it rains, for the front and wind-shield of the car were torn off by shells in Belgium.

July 30

After breakfast, fall in with Commandant Becdelièvre and Captain de La Ville de Roux. We talk again of the war.

'Never,' said Becdelièvre, 'was there seen such a tedious campaign; to pass the time in holes in the ground, seeing nothing, risking your life every time you poke your head up!'

'Our men in the trenches,' adds La Ville de Roux... 'they're not heroes, they're martyrs. They know when they start that if they return, they will be wounded or mutilated or helpless with rheumatism, and they go to it so bravely, our little fellows of the Ninth Corps!'

Becdelièvre thinks that there will be a quiet winter, even more tiresome than the last.

We are joined by the general and the commissary lieutenant; the latter shows me a photograph he has taken of

the château; he suggests to me that he take snapshots of the interior of the salons.

The officer from the quartermaster department comes to pay me for my hay; I have sold him fifteen hundred kilogrammes for one hundred and fifty francs.

We look about for orderlies to put away the stuff I have bought at La Neuville; none are to be found; they are all deep in the joys of fishing; they catch fish as big as their little fingers, which they fry to their extreme delight, and they are loath to leave the lake in the park.

I have the railings taken away that surround the great clusters of Chinese star daisies in front of the château; I help Marcel, so that the work may be finished quickly. Becdelièvre comes to ask if I should like him to send me some soldiers; I tell him that the work is done, but that I shall be grateful if he will send some men to rake up the paths about the château. The general comes from the salon to see the effect of removing the railing around the flowers and compliments Marcel on his soldier's cap, which gives him a martial air, asks his age, takes the lawn-cutter from his hands, and shows how he should hold it to mow the grass evenly. Then he goes over to the offices, to scold the secretaries who are covering the lawn with scraps of paper.

Then came the squad of rakers. Lieutenant Thierry is suggested to oversee the work. Daulay appears, embarrassed as ever, more of a seminarist than ever. We send him to sit on the row of benches, with Mademoiselle Delahaye. The general discourses; on the site of the round temple which had become an ice-house; he would like to have the ruin cleared of rubbish.

Denyse and I carry cider to the rakers. Thierry passes, mopping his face, running after the workers. Through the salon window we offer him a glass of something cool; he asks leave to come in and take tea with us. Chatter between this young officer and our corporal-nurse, who is lunching

with us; the lieutenant, very cordial, shakes his hand, asks about his officers, his camp, and readily puts him at his ease. He tells us his adventure of yesterday. He had been with his little car to visit his parents at Isle d'Adam. A triumphal departure after dinner; then the motor declines to know anything about what is going on; he pushes his car before him as far as a station, takes a train, arrives at Clermont on the stroke of ten, and inquires how to get to Pronleroy. They tell him that the general is dining at Fitz-James; he goes there to ask to be put on the right track, makes a most grotesque entry, caught in the glare of the electric lights with his package, and all the dust of the road on his face; while the staff in its most gorgeous uniforms gazes at him with stupefaction. General Lefèvre's first thought is that something serious has happened to the division and that they have sent for him.

Sunday, August 1

High Mass, accompanied on the harmonium by Simone; sermon by the diocesan missionary priest of Vendée — very patriotic, overflowing with fervor and eloquence: a change from our usual sermons. After the service, talked with this missionary of the Chabots; of their curé, M. Gabard, whom he knows. We invite him to walk in the park with his seminarists.

The general has sent us a full assortment of delicious little cakes which opportunely extend our breakfast of which Marie has forgotten a part.

Discussion with the cook as to the price of the big roast of yesterday. Vain search for the orderlies — always at the fishing — to make them service the toilet linen for the officers; as that is an annoyance to them, they declare that there are no napkins to change.

I have kept Madame Dupéroux' horse so that after Vespers we could take a drive with my daughters and Mademoi-

selle Delahaye. Amasse returns to inform me that we need passports for everybody to pass along the roads. I send him to the mayor's office to get them and he has them countersigned by the officer on duty. That seal will give us the right to circulate freely and to be saluted by all the soldiers we meet.

Threatening weather... the carriage arrives... no one is ready... a great rush after hats and umbrellas, and we take aboard the passengers. Simone remains at home with me, arranges the flowers in the salon, the candles in the candelabras... there is to be a reception this evening.

Our dinner is not so long as the general's; we have time to light the candles and arrange the chairs. They make a good deal of noise leaving the table; they laugh loudly, and the officers go through extraordinary antics in the great hall.

The general enters and presents to us a group of officers: a very dashing young captain, several lieutenants from Saint-Just, one of whom is M. de Cheponay, who has just taken a dancing lesson in order to be able to swing the young women with the rest.

Departure of the guests... a summer night with many stars... we talk on the veranda: the young captain talks automobile... long journeys with the young Lebourd couple: return from the races at Verries, with an excursion into a ditch — without breaking anything, and the alarm of the young driver of an English car which runs into the cover when it stopped because of the bank.

'But I was that driver,' said Quartermaster Cloquemin, from the seat, where he was preparing to drive the general's guests home.

There certainly were a lot of us at Pronleroy.

August 2

Rain... this afternoon we are embroidering in the large salon. The door opens and closes hurriedly.

'Why, come in, General.'

'I am very indiscreet; I expected to find the room empty, and I wanted to show the beautiful salon to General du Cugnac, cuirassier, who commands my regiments of the line.'

We talk about Périgord... Cugnac and Foucault were originally from there. The general will have me to dine one evening... a certain evening of which they whisper together, and which will be a wonderful surprise.

All day long there were goings and comings of motors, and the return of Balsan, who brings me a huge box of chocolates and *fruits glacés* from Rabattel's.

'I returned a day earlier from my leave... it was too tedious in the rear... the people are pitiable, look at you like strange beasts... it's there that they are doing penance!'

We talk of the mortality in the villages; from his village in the Indre, thirty-eight have died on the field of honor; his keeper's two sons have been killed, and he tried to comfort him.

'There's no need, Monsieur Henri, about my two boys, for I'm proud of them.'

He speaks of his sister, Madame de Villeneur, who lives in a wonderful château near Montdidier; she has never left her estate.

'Of course, the women must keep up the homes.'

'My brother-in-law was there... his health was not good enough for him to be mobilized; but he displayed energy enough so far as the Germans were concerned. He obtained a promise that the six villages which his property include should be subjected to no annoyance. Von Kluck, who had quarters in his house, said to him on arriving:

'You, monsieur, are the first French mayor whom I have found at his post...'

I inquire about this review of which they speak with

bated breath; he goes to get documentary proof of it; he apologizes for not being able to pass the evening with us, as there are only three for the general's bridge.

August 3

The officers are very busy in having a number of shower-baths set up for the men in the laundry. The surgeon comes to pay us a visit. He is very much a man of the world; before the war he was in garrison at Angers; now he is returning from a furlough at Le Gers. He has need of the good cheer of the staff. All who know him best expected to see him with a very long face. 'We must be cheerful,' he says to us; 'we are instructed to look after our mental condition; we avoid thinking of anything that might be unpleasant. We have made for ourselves the mentalities of schoolboys. What shall we do to get back into the normal course of life?'

My daughters speak of the thoughtfulness of the officers they have supplied with food, always asking, 'Is there enough for our men?' before accepting any for themselves.

The surgeon said quietly: 'That was natural enough, it couldn't be otherwise; our men are just big boys who are placed in our care.'

After dinner we read aloud from some books on the preparation of wine. We go on to the historians of the nineteenth century... Thiers, 'The Battle of Eylau.' We talk of the battles of the Empire, in which the casualties were so few beside those of to-day; we go on to speak of the wounds of the present day.

'There is only one possibility to which I cannot resign myself,' said the general, 'and that is to being mutilated; death is a hundred times better. After a few years, the halo that surrounds the great number of wounded will have disappeared; their families will make them feel cruelly what derelicts they have become. If I were a surgeon, I

would finish up all the wounded with morphine. I have urged it — without success, by the way — on our surgeons. I have just decorated a poor devil; he had lost an arm, a thigh, an eye — half a man — he was happy with his Cross, to be sure; but to live in such shape as that when one is twenty!’

He talks about the blind, who are so numerous; of the deaf, whom he thinks more to be pitied; of the injuries to the heart and nervous shock caused by the wind of passing shells. In Belgium, a horseman of his escort had fallen under such conditions, without a trace of wound; they had put him again on his horse; he did not speak, but seemed badly stricken; the next day he was dead.

There have been such days of shells falling in Compiègne; a peasant was found dead of fright in his cellar. The surgeon says that they often find cases of death from fright, reactions of the nervous system upon the bony structure bringing about sudden lesions.

The general delivers himself much more freely. He makes bold at last to give us some of his ideas about the war. He finds it very dramatic that Madame de Villeneuve remains so near the front. He tells of his visit to an estate in the neighborhood: the husband is mobilized and an officer; the young wife every morning in the working season sets out at four o’clock in a little car to inspect the fields.

He says that, when they return, the men will find themselves without work, the women having become accustomed to do everything. ‘Bah! they will let them live; it’s so much easier to obey than to command.’

I reply: ‘It’s easy to say that when one is at the head of a division and unmarried. I do not understand the taste for obedience.’

Simone has forgotten her key; I go back with her to Made-moiselle’s chamber so that she need not be left alone with all the soldiers going to and fro. Returning, I meet, in pro-

cession, the general, with his cap pulled down to his ears, which gives him the look of old age, and Messrs. Boisanger and Becdelièvre.

August 4

I have decided to take my daughter Suzanne, whose eyes are troubling her, to Paris for a consultation; the surgeon has given me the name of a very able oculist. I shall go Thursday while Mademoiselle Delahaye can act as chaperon for my other daughters. We shall bring back from Paris the chairs and tables which we lack, the bathtub, and the footbath which the officers demand.

Saturday, August 7

Return by way of Chantilly; again there is difficulty about passes at Saint-Just. They send us to the office, where an officer and gendarme storm away in the midst of weeping women.

'What in the devil are you doing here in the zone of the armies... except embarrassing your husbands! You're turned back — and so are you...'

I draw near.

'I am returning home at Pronleroy with my daughter.'

'That's all right. Go ahead.'

I catch sight of Amasse, my modest carriage, and Madame Dupérroux's pony, and I ask, surprised:

'Is everything going all right at Pronleroy?'

Amasse replies, shamefaced, as if he were responsible: 'All right... but they've gone!'

'Who has gone?'

'Why, the whole staff. Ah, that was a show... there was a procession of troops, of wagons... and all those officers' shirts which were in the wash... we passed a whole night ironing them.'

Simone and Denyse are awaiting us at the entrance to the courtyard.

‘They went yesterday morning at six... there were troops beyond Pronleroy who started on foot, and went toward Arras; the escort in automobiles started Thursday evening ... the saddest part is to lose the review... the King of the Belgians who was to come to review the troops.’

We are all overcome at sight of the desert which Pronleroy has become. The general has left a very pleasant note for me. He sent for Simone, who came to the large salon with her governess.

‘What frightened me was that the general told us not to be afraid; that wherever the Ninth Corps was they always held firmly, and then I was saluted by all the officers.’

Immediately after the departure of the staff, there arrived a convoy of mules, hundreds of mules. They entered through the gate, through the wagon-roads, through the barrier of the Tuilerie... they came to ask Mademoiselle and me where to put them... as if I knew! I sent for M. Tonnelier; he came at once and laid out the camp in the courtyard.

We are tired and disheartened. At half-past nine, on going up to our rooms, we saw bright lights on the road to Cressonsacq... passing motors... and multitudes of small beams which extend in great circles. They are the convoys which accompany the troops from Clermont toward Montdidier. What comforts us is that we do not hear the cannon.

August 17

In the post, a letter in a small unfamiliar handwriting; I open it and read:

PRONLEROY

Respectful homage of the author

*Pourquoi ton nom si simple évoque-t-il la joie,
Riche Manoir, montrant ton aspect seigneurial?
Orné des grands tilleuls, ton site se déploie
Naguère plein de paix, aujourd'hui très martial.*

*Le Boche l'an dernier avait foulé ta route
Et sur Paris ému, filé, tambour battant,
Ramenés par nos gars en complète dérouté
On a vu nos couleurs pour toujours maintenant;
Y flotter sur ton toit aux caprices du vent!*

L. DE BECDELIÈVRE
État-Major 18^{me} Division

August 20

The bombardment is renewed more violently than ever toward Tricot, Quennevière, and Lassigny.

Last evening we saw a German aeroplane pass fighting with five French ones, the great birds standing out against the sky all surrounded with sparks; the bombs we see from a distance.

August 24

We decide to reply in verse to Commandant de Becdelièvre. After several attempts, Suzanne furnished us with the following anagram on the word 'État-Major':

*Évocatour de paix ou martiale demeure:
Tout manoir de jadis garde son brin d'orgueil,
Au sourd bruit du canon, Pronleroy guettait l'heure,
Très fier, à nos héros d'ouvrir un jour son seuil.
Mais la halte y fut brève et dans la lutte épique
Aux sages conseillers d'aider les éperons
Juger est votre part... Dedans notre Chronique
On lira que la gloire y vint par ce guidon
Redire les grands faits de Marne et de Belgique.*

September 27

My daughters depart for their boarding-school. It was high time to send them away... this constant cannonading wrecks their nerves. Constant changes... my pass was lost... it was necessary to have another, and send it by the station-mistress at La Neuville to be countersigned at Saint-Just. Traveling with a druggist from Amiens who

talks about the English troops. There are a million of them in France and their number increases every day. Artillery and an abundance of munitions, magnificent *matériel* in extraordinary quantities... as many bathtubs and shower-baths as cannon. When they can't sing it, they whistle the '*Marseillaise*.'

September 30

Exciting return. The train service is fantastic. It isn't working at all to-day. I am loaded down with bundles: I leave my valises to be sent for and carry in my hand only a nondescript package containing glassware, china, and shovels and tongs purchased at the last moment, and set out on foot.

Saint-Just is stuffed with troops. A convoy starts for Plessier, a band at the head, and I march to the stirring accents of '*Sambre-et-Meuse*.'

My package is heavy. A little Belgian refugee offers to carry it as far as Plessier. I hope to find on the way a wagon in which I can ride, but nothing passes. I take my seat on a milestone. Dr. Delalande's carriage passes me, but he is returning to breakfast at Saint-Just. Just then a soldier passes me at a gallop... he shouts a very familiar '*Good-day, my little lady*.' I go on toward Angivilliers. I meet a party of laborers, then three hogs who conceive an affection for me and refuse to leave me; I fight them with blows of my parasol; the workmen writhe with laughter at this epic combat. One of the laborers helps me drive them away, and, as he sees I am very tired, urges me to rest at the inn, which is very proper for a lady alone. It is two o'clock. I have had nothing to eat since eight. A tall and decidedly unprepossessing woman receives me and says that I can drink, but not eat in her house. As she is a grocer, I buy from her a package of biscuits and she brings me some Banyuls. I dip my biscuits in this mixture.

I try to hire a carriage to take me home. The woman agrees to take charge of my package, and Madame Mallard, the butcher's wife, will bring it to me on Monday. I go on again creeping from one milestone to another, until at last a good woman in a little car appears... she is going in the right direction and she asks me to ride.

At Pronleroy another disaster: I have left in my valise the bunch of keys which never leaves me. My room is locked. I am at my own door, and the other keys are hanging in that room. Luckily, there are some small beds made in the apartments set apart for billets. I set up my quarters in what is called the 'abbé's room.' My idiotic disaster is intensified: my clothes are locked up, I am drenched, my shoes covered with mud.... 'Do as they do in war'... now is the time to say it! A great black collar hanging in the vestibule if fastened with pins will serve me as a petticoat; a canvas apron will be my corsage; a beige cloak which falls low enough for decency gives to this collar-petticoat a sufficiently presentable appearance; my daughters have left behind some old shoes with holes in them which will serve me as slippers.

I have neither my books here nor my lamp, nor any of the supplies from the reserve chest. I find a little oil in the lamps on the piano, a pile of old Maine and Loire newspapers. In the kitchen, I find four bits of sugar on a plate, a glass of water, and a tablet of chocolate. I am too tired to run after Marie and bother about dinner. A cup of chocolate and some biscuits will make up my repast.

November 26

Marie comes to tell me that two officers are asking for me. I join them in the servants' quarters. A commandant and a surgeon would like to bring here in five or six days some young recruits for instruction; they belong to the Colonial infantry. Their units are in camp at Rouvillers; they are too

much restricted there. I display no enthusiasm... the Colonial has a bad reputation for looting.

November 28

At eight o'clock they come to tell me that a non-com. officer wants to know how many officers' rooms I can supply. I reply that they can count upon ten. I will attend to it after Mass. Marie returns to say: 'The whole regiment is coming; you must take them all in at once.'

It is no longer the aforementioned Colonials, but the 129th Territorials which detrains at Estrées.

A tall, pale officer and a small, red-faced one take the lodgings... they have an accent which does not surprise me when they say they are natives of Gers. I show them the chambers in the wings and the small rooms below.

There will be two battalions to take care of... we must give them the Tuilerie, the attics, the barns, and several places which I ordinarily keep in reserve. The wine-press room, harness-room and a small stable full of apples alone are emphatically refused. I appealed to the surgeon to have thoroughly disinfected the Tuilerie, where there have been sick refugees. I install the two officers in the small dining-room; I tell them that I will eat after they have finished at half-past twelve, but they take their places at the table at that hour. I have to carry my luncheon into the large dining-room... it is like winter in this weather — nine below zero. With all these arrangements to be made, it was impossible for me to go to Mass. After luncheon, I go out in the avenue to look at my orchard of fruit trees planted before the frost; the tall officer joins me, having come to thank me for the Pommard and the fruit with which I have enriched their luncheon. He believes they are to be at Pronleroy for a long time and asks for divers things to be done. He ends by proposing to me, since they are occupying my dining-room, to preside at their meals... they have an excellent cook, the

best food in the regiment, and are not a little proud of it. I accept. That will simplify service... they can place their men properly only in my kitchen, having neither oven nor implements.

The cold is horrible and increases from hour to hour; all the panes of glass on the north side are covered with coatings of ice which make a thick curtain.

I take the officers to the billiard-room, where they make fires in the big fireplace. The captain-commandant will arrive to-morrow with the smart member of the regiment — the baron, now on leave in Paris. I put on my black velvet dress and a black satin cape for dinner. In addition to Lieutenant Decan and M. Merlateau, there is an officer whom they have invited; I guess at their professions. M. Decan is the head clerk in a jeweler's establishment in Paris. M. Merlateau is an insurance agent. M. Mouillaron is a farmer in a small way, but he has learned to eat like a gentleman since he has had bars on his sleeve.

The roast is badly cooked, the potatoes spoiled, but there are some excellent kidneys *brochette*.

November 29

It was determined yesterday that the battalion should lend me a horse so that I could deliver some apples for cider to M. Deneubourg of Montiers.

At ten o'clock I go down to the courtyard to have the apples weighed. I find the door of the dovecote open, although it was closed yesterday. In the little garden at one side somebody has pulled up my lettuce and my flowering onions and thrown them on the dung-heap. I cannot find the sides of the barrel or the front end board of the wagon. Nothing remains but burned scraps. There is disorder, a mess which drives me beside myself. I scold and storm, and declare that what is left locked shall remain so and that I propose to make a report to the officers.

M. Decan, who removed the keys of the places reserved yesterday, remembers nothing about it. It was not done by his company. It was not done by any one's company. I begin to speak sharply... that this billet will conduct itself as have others or that I, myself, will go to the colonel. At that announcement, the officers bestir themselves; it will be put in the official report and read aloud in the courtyard that every one under pain of punishment is forbidden to enter into places that are locked.

I return to the men, who are loading the bags of apples. I send away the line of soldiers, who, on the pretext of assisting, are stealing the fruit.

Some one comes to tell me that luncheon is served. I reply that I will not breakfast until the cart has left the courtyard.

Ate a bit, hastily, at two o'clock. Now we must empty the great stable, which has been filled with firewood, to make room for the horses of the regiment. They give me two shifts of men to carry the wood to the pile on the other side of the courtyard... the soldiers talk and loiter, but do nothing. I call for the corporal; he takes up his station in the stable, I facing him on the woodpile, and we set all the loafers at work.

They tell me that the work will not be finished this evening... it rains — the men are afraid of getting wet. I announce that when the work is done, I will give them something to drink. The soldiers recover their strength as if by enchantment; the hundred piles that remain are moved, the huge pieces stacked, and the doors locked.

I enter the billiard-room and am presented to the Baron, M. de Sigalas, a tall, stork-like man high on his legs, with a face *à la* Cyrano, very aristocratic and clever. He looks about the room, especially at the pictures. 'Ah, my uncle!' 'Yes, the Marquis de la Rochejacquelin...'

M. de Sigalas is the cousin of my Aunt de Chabot, the son

of a Lur-Saluces; we find ourselves at home in the land of relationships at once.

In the courtyard I meet Captain Specel. He is introduced to me... he is the only officer of military aspect except M. de Sigalas... he seems to have authority. He is a small, active man, a little red of face, with mischievous blue eyes and an intelligent expression. He asks me for board and lodging for two more officers. They are at present at the mayor's, in the attics without fireplaces, where they are freezing. I agree; I will give them the studio and Simone's bedroom. The remainder of the day is passed in moving the armchairs of red velvet, chairs of flowered silk, and the very delicate marquetry furniture to a safe place.

November 30

At dawn the soldiers send to me for the keys to the small upper room, as the dining-room is filled with smoke; the extra furniture and the trunks are carefully arranged in the corridor when I arrive. They are taking down the pier glass from the mantelpiece; the captain is looking after the work.

When I return, they show me a long crack, more than a yard long, and broad enough to put your hand through. The blackened wood inside was beginning to char... it is good luck that it has not set fire to the château. M. Specel fills up the hole with cement... he thinks that it is the shaking of the cannonade that has caused the subsidence of the soil and consequently made this fissure.

We move into the large dining-room, where we light the stove which will from now on burn night and day. The captain inspects the salons... gives me his advice as an architect as to the arrangement of a cupolaed niche for the organ in the music-room, which is too small to hold the instrument.

There is to be a lecture to glorify for the soldiers the idea of Fatherland. The captain has asked for the church, which

the curé has refused... the mayor's office is not large enough. I offer my large hall.

At dinner, we talk of the battle of Champagne, a political maneuver which has cost the lives of a hundred thousand men. They argue... I speak of the shells falling short which has mown down so many of our men. It seems that it is inevitable in a modern war... assaulting troops move more or less quickly... they must bombard such a point at such an hour... if our troops are still there, it is impossible to inform the batteries, which are firing so many kilometres away, especially when bad weather lessens the visibility of the aviators.

December 1

Preparation of the great hall for the lecture... moving the furniture to make room for the benches of the school. The orator is presented to me: a feverish, dried-up, extreme Southern type, he is a lawyer accustomed to political gatherings.

They give me warning that the gardener is ready to plant the shrubbery... I must go out in the rain to place the clumps and measure the distances. Then I return to the great hall. The soldiers are arriving in large numbers. They are interested in the pictures. The table and the orator's glass of water stand in line before some large pieces of furniture which we have been unable to move.

The officers, in their voice of command, order the men occupy one end of the hall and not lean against the pictures. The orator arrives, utters some fine phrases about the Fatherland, speaks of those who have wished for war: the German people and their Kaiser. His voice is of the Jaurès type... of excellent quality for the theater with a singing accent.

I take my place at the back near a Louis XIV commode which we must protect from likelihood of injury. M. Decan

joins me there. Soldiers continue to arrive; the hall is overflowing. Three hundred soldiers are listening, very shrewd, with more understanding than I should have supposed. The orator speaks of Germany's need of expansion. He walks up and down, waves his arms, more and more wrought up. He has a fine peroration on the Fatherland, the domain of ideas, the home of civilization taking in much more than the native village.

Some applause. Thanks from the captain. The soldiers do not want to go. They remain, nose in the air, turned into Medusas by the pictures. I work my way through the crowd to compliment the orator, who seems very sensible.

Immediately after, the labor of cleaning up. It has grown so hot that the walls are steaming... we have to take down the pictures to wipe off the water and wash away the mud with which the feet of six hundred soldiers have plastered the floor.

December 2

I am told that Captain Fave, hairdresser by profession, has been invited for this evening to dinner and would bring three fellow guests. M. Decan suspects that he wants to see what life in a château is like. I concern myself with laying a pretty table and put on a new black satin dress with a waist of sapphire blue and a little collar of gold embroidery.

I go downstairs a little late... all the officers are standing in the dining-room. Captain Fave is presented to me, and he presents in turn the three officers of the First Colonial... these latter very military of aspect.

Menu: oysters, beef tongue with tomato sauce, roast beef, salad, potatoes, cream with chocolate, and *beignets soufflés*, which are the triumph of the chef and the glory of the 129th!

The 'wall impossible to cross which the German trenches

form' is mentioned. M. Decan says, in a very indifferent tone, that that wall would never be knocked down. The officer who is at my left cries, with sparkling eyes, trembling voice, ready to throw himself on him:

'It is easy to see that you never saw the Boches run away at the end of your bayonets. We will escort them to the frontier when and as we choose!'

'I beg your pardon... If it were so easy...'

The officer, pale as death, rises to his feet, ready to jump.

'What did you say, lieutenant?'

M. Decan caught himself up.

'That is to say... I meant... I have no doubt...'

'Ah, very good. I will never allow a French officer to express doubt of victory in my presence.... If you had had these Boches as we have, with a bayonet in their loins, you would know what it is... yes, we shall have to pay the price, but when we really mean it, we shall drive them out and far beyond the frontier.'

He is magnificent in his enthusiasm, this Colonial. He is little and frail, but strong in his own valor. He personifies the spirit of the offensive in the trained officer, the force of him who will conquer because he is bound to.

Ah, that scene... this is true history, noble history which I see being lived.

Friday, December 3

Looking after the clump of trees on the right, which are being replanted. M. de Sigalas comes to talk with me in the park... he talks of the Beauregards of Deffend, whom I knew at Boissière, then discourses upon the war....

'We started on a war of giving as good as we should receive... two years, three years... and with very little hope of victory. After the Marne we could have concluded an honorable peace. That opportunity we have allowed to escape... and that means that we shall have caused to be killed all these people for nothing!'

We talk politics as do people who detest the present régime... we touch upon the subject of legitimacy... of the return of the princes.

‘The time after the war will be terrible from every point of view, and that is why the Republic dares not end the war... it is equally afraid of victory and of defeat.’

‘And the men at the front... what will they have to say to all that?’

‘Nothing... the men will have been killed... with their allowances the women live comfortably... certain ones enjoy themselves... the men in fat jobs enrich themselves. They, too, desire only one thing... that the present state of things shall go on; but the settlement will be disastrous. It will be necessary for all of us to unite against socialism... the country will have enough to do while simmering in all sorts of embarrassments. A legitimate prince who should choose well his moment... what a chance he would have!’

I tell him that I should like to invite him to dinner, but that I can scarcely call myself at home.

‘But you, madame, would you do us the honor to come and take pot-luck with us? I will present to you my captain — a charming fellow.’

Saturday, December 4

There is no one to press the apples for cider. Marcel cannot do everything alone, and I am going to help him. As a result, my hands are all black with the juice of fruit.

Invitation brought by the orderly... M. de Sigalas asks me to lunch with him to-morrow, and to be good enough to name my own hour.

Sunday, December 5

I put on my prettiest blue moiré waist... tailor-made and velvet hat with assorted feathers; pearl necklace and many rings; my hands are almost clear of the apple stains.

On leaving Mass, M. de Sigalas calls for me to take me to

his quarters. I ask him to come in... one must certainly give a turn to the apple press. He will help me, and I shall be able to bring a basket of fruit and a bottle of my incomparable Madeira.

A bright fire burns in the superb fireplace of carved stone. The small dining-room of the old Morainvillers house is dressed up to receive me: there are branches and chrysanthemums in the vases, a huge bunch of Christmas roses on the table. The table is very simple, wax-white cloth, plates of flowered china; pewter forks.

Presentation of Captain Casanove... a very attractive fellow, very clever, and quite the Casanovian. The young man announces the Vicomte d'Arrentières and Major Boule... the devil of this is that he is the officer with whom I had an altercation day before yesterday: he demanded the right to pass through a hall which had been reserved, and which was filled with all the gardening tools and the pigeon-house which it has been necessary to remove to give lodgings to the new arrivals. He gave no sign of this encounter, however, and showed himself perfectly friendly.

Menu: *Potage croûte au pot, petits croûtons*, and *fromage rapé*... *paté de canard du Périgord*, *cassoulet toulousain*, which comes in its little brown earthen pot, *gigot* of mutton, fried potatoes, *petits pois*, chestnut cake with chocolate, cheese, fruit, Burgundy and Madeira. Plates are not changed except for me.

'The table is our only pleasure,' says Sigalas. 'To have a pretty woman at it is a thing without precedent!'

All of them are attentive, anxious to amuse... busily occupied in making me eat and drink a lot.

The major offers me Oriental cigarettes, very high-flavored. We all smoke, drink coffee, but no liqueurs.

I offer my piano, and we go to the château to finish up our afternoon.

Major Boule takes his place at the piano and plays

waltzes. Captain Casanove sings the *Chanson des Heures* and *l'Anneau d'Argent*. We hum airs from the *Petit Duc*, from *la Belle Hélène*, the scores of which I have. At four o'clock everybody goes to escort M. d'Arrentières.

December 6

We are awaiting the colonel's inspection. I am looking over the arrangements of the clumps of shrubbery. Suddenly branches crashing... *dzz, dzz!* Gilbert, one of the refugees from Mareuil, who is accustomed to it, says, 'Ah, that is a shell bursting in the trees.' As they are going through firing exercises two kilometres away, then this must be a shell which exploded by accident in our direction.

The colonel arrives... tall, thin, gray-haired, very military and stern with his staff... a professional officer, from the retired list, very amiable to me. Sigalas has disappeared. The colonel has hinted to him an order to go on leave, in the tone in which one hints at an arrest. Sigalas doesn't need to have it said twice... he straps his valise and goes off to dine in Paris.

I serve the tea. Captain Specel invites the colonel to a grand luncheon which the companies in camp at the château wish to offer him... he proposes Thursday. The colonel peremptorily declares that he accepts for Sunday. Consternation... that will take away all chance of leaves.

Friday, December 8

First preparations for the great luncheon. At table there is no talk of anything but the menu. Lieutenant Decan will go — without leave — to Paris, to bring back from the market supplies of old and choice wines.

Saturday, December 9

The first supplies from the market arrive... boxes and servants appear on the stroke of noon. We await M. Decan

to set the table... the leaves are all ready, but no M. Decan. We learn from his orderly that the lieutenant and the captain have gone to Paris because of the Folies Bergères, appropriating leave for Saturday, not being able to obtain it regularly for Sunday; and leaving to me all the care of getting up the luncheon.

Sunday, December 10

Cold awakening... heavy fall of snow.

Have been at Mass, which was very long as always.

On my return, while I am splashing through the snow, a carriage, in which the colonel of the 129th is coming to our luncheon from La Neuville, stops and asks me to get in. I alight with M. Lepetipas in the great hall; no one of the officers is there, and without me the colonel will not be received. M. Decan, who returned this morning, very set up by his little party, is rushing around the office. He tells some one, with much secrecy, to ask me not to speak to the colonel of his unlawful departure to Paris.

Colonel Lepetipas, retired after twenty-five years of service and of injustice which have soured his temper, is in a delightful humor this morning. He expresses a malicious surprise, in reading the menu, that we have found so many good things at Pronleroy... he compliments us on the fine table all decorated with purple chrysanthemums and wreaths of red ivy. After luncheon, every officer arranges his kodak in order to keep a souvenir of this delightful meal.

The music arrives, and is placed in an angle of the courtyard, and the people enter next... then come the mayor, Madame Zahnn, the Thomases, and Madame de Paw. It is freezing cold... Captain Specel goes in search of M. Tonnelier. I am embarrassed about inviting the ladies, for the hall is set apart for the officers. I speak a word about this to the colonel. He replies:

'But you are at home, madame, so pray take in those poor shivering women.'

We send the music into the dining-room, separate the men from the white wine, and the whole afternoon passes in hearing played dance tunes and military marches.

They try a minuet. M. Decan will be pleased to dance it with me.

'But I don't know how to dance it.'

'What a pity... it would have suited you so well, Madame la Marquise.'

December 24

A day at Paris to bring home my daughter Simone, who is to pass Christmas with me. Runnings about for supplies for the Christmas eve midnight supper and the Christmas tree. In the department stores what magnificence! How they throw away money! One is constantly conscious of the rich, careless capital, swimming in abundance.

The return journey was very easy. M. Dubouch awaits us in the colonel's carriage, attends to all our luggage, and simplifies everything. Summons of the gendarme, who viscéed our passes, but with a touch of suspicion on seeing ladies enter a regimental carriage.

We find the officers seated around the stove. I present my daughter and that frightens them. Simone sits opposite me at dinner. I again invite the officers to take a cup of chocolate after the midnight Mass.

The dinner at an end, we arrange the pretty gift table with flowers and cake. The officers begin their evening with a Manila, then come the surgeons from La Neuville with Sigalas and Casanove; they ask for music. We light a great fire in the yellow salon. Casanove hums tunes from *Manon*, airs from Gounod, very much out of fashion, which I have not heard sung since we left La Grifferie.

We start for the midnight Mass in marvelous moonlight

which makes the avenue like silver. The church is already lighted. I go to confession, and the curé interrupts his homily to say:

‘They are going, you know.’

‘Who?’ I say, shamefaced.

‘Our Territorials. They are expecting at any moment the order to start.’

The church is full of soldiers... most of them are singing in beautiful voice, intense and serious. The Credo, sung by all those men’s voices, is most impressive.

A few soldiers take communion with us, but not many.

The group of officers join us at the door of the church... Casanove, Sigalas, Fave, Lavernie, Dubouch. We feel very small under the huge shadow of the lindens in the courtyard. And then comes the joyful return to the brilliantly lighted dining-room. A good Henri IV soup, with grated cheese warms us. Casanove attacks the meat pie... the chocolate cream is excellent... the cake done to a turn. There is Saint-Estèphe and Madeira, which we sip while nibbling little cakes. M. Risp joins us as soon as his musical Mass at La Neuville is at an end... we become more intimate... a sort of family breath passes over us... the fathers take from their portfolios the photographs of their children. Casanove has one, the first, born since the war, and whom he has seen only on the day it came into the world. When I suggest that perhaps it is time to go to bed, no one is sleepy, though it is three o’clock in the morning.

Christmas Day

We wake decidedly late. We find the officers at breakfast, a very carefully prepared meal to which our cakes form a climax... then come the ‘surprises.’ Each of the officers goes up to his room and brings back multitudes of gifts... plums from Agen, stuffed with pink cream, in parchment boxes with the arms of the city... dates with pista-

chic nuts, *marrons glacés*, caramels, chocolates, and preserved fruit. My daughter no longer frightens the officers... they talk merrily of the songs of old days, of old Christmas carols in dialect. Then, as he is talking, M. Merlateau hums 'Oun poutou' (a kiss), a song famous in Gascony, and, on our expressions of admiration, his voice grows stronger; he sings loudly in a very beautiful, strong, ardent voice.

M. Risp translates the couplets afterward. M. Merlateau chants the *Toulousaine*; Risp, Fave, and all the others unite their voices in the song as if drawn on by the melody in spite of themselves. Their eyes are half shut ... they are no longer in the dining-room at Pronleroy. The pale ray which lightens the panes gives back to them the ruddy sunlight of their South and the deep blue of its sky... old carols succeed the old ballads... they chant *Montagnes des Pyrénées*... the great musical dream carries them away... the maternal sacred soil where they were born lives again in their voices, in their eyes, in their hearts.

And we stand deeply moved, my daughter and I, before this ecstasy of souls for the Little Fatherland.

December 26

The 129th went away this morning.

At seven o'clock the new allotment. I meet on the stairs a flag which is being taken up to the colonel's chamber. It is the first time a flag ever came into the château. Seen closely, rolled in sheets, it seemed an immense flag... squares of material, which in peace is hardly looked at, but at the front or returning from the battle it is the living symbol of the Fatherland for which one would willingly die, and I bend my head, deeply moved, not knowing how to salute it. The colonel has sent an invitation to dinner. We go down in evening dress, Simone and I, but carrying in our hands our bowls for hot water, to be filled in the kitchen.

The colonel and officers await us in line for a solemn entry to the dining-room. A servant has seen our predicament and appropriates our bowls. I walk toward the middle of the table, which is ordinarily left for the hostess. The colonel takes his place and puts me at his right, Simone at his left. The colonel is an Alsatian from Belfort; he has come from Madagascar by the way of Suez with such a fear of arriving too late that his hair has become completely white, which forms a contrast with his otherwise youthful look.

December 30

Our soldiers went away the 27th, and we have had two days of rest.

I am in bed sick with a headache. Simone has a very bad cold, and is very melancholy sitting by the fireplace. We are told that another regiment has arrived, the Twenty-Seventh Colonials. A captain, a section of machine-gunners, and a lieutenant request lodgings. A hundred men to be put up, forty-five horses and the machine guns. Simone rather sullenly takes my instructions and goes to give them to the captain. She returns furiously angry... the captain has treated her as a negligible quantity... said to her, as to a little girl, 'You're very nice.'

Other officers arrive... they need five bedrooms, offices, and two dining-rooms. I must go to see about it... I shiver with cold under my furs.

I approach this terrible captain. A fair-haired young man who doesn't know how to salute, but is very deferential to me. I want to open for ourselves the large dining-room. Simone thinks that the linen will be quite sufficient for our modest meals.

When we have got ready the dishes, plates, and glasses, the cooks come to tell us that they are arranging the commissary at the Fontaine farm and that they are going there.

December 31

To-morrow will be the Christmas tree for the children of the village and no preparations are even begun. Marcel is going to cut branches of hemlock, set them in a cask which he will drape with turkey red. We make tarts and cakes all day long.

1916

January 1, 1916

At three o'clock the procession of the children... compliments from Marie-Louise Mallard, distribution of toys... luncheon amidst an infernal pandemonium... all the small boys playing with their trumpets and drums.

January 4

Captain Forgeron, who is an engineer, has taken charge of the installation of my bathroom... his soldiers go to La Neuville to get the pipes for the hot water, to be made by Fonbartein, the mobilized plumber... some pipes that are lacking.

In the middle of the work, the captain takes me aside... he is one of the officers whose colonel has authorized him to send for his family, and he asks me if I could give them quarters in the château.

'... For it is a regular invasion, my wife and my little ones and a nurse.'

I offer him a room, with an alcove for him and the children, and the room opposite for the nurse.

'That will be perfect. You will cap the climax of your kindness by writing my wife to invite her, making out that she is a relative of yours.'

'I will write to-morrow.'

'To-day if you can... they will have the letter put off at Étrechy. There will be a customs officer there, and no gendarme at the station.'

Saturday, January 8

To-day is the day that I am to go for Madame Forgeron, although I have been ill all night. Simone accompanies

me.... We set out in Madame Thomas's light delivery van. At the door of the station we spy two gendarmes with a suspicious look... that is not good luck. One train passes, then two, then three... the gendarmes move away and the customs officer comes to me.

'It is for the lady of whom a captain spoke to me that you are here?... I know about it.'

'It is a relative I am waiting for.'

He smiled... the rascal:

'You know this relative?... probably she's being held at Clermont for a visé or has been turned back to the rear. If you are able to recognize her, you will do well to go on to Clermont.'

We have no idea what to do. Simone would like to go on to Clermont. Madame Thomas says that it is too far for her horse, which is already tired. There is nothing to do but turn back... my headache is getting worse because of the cussedness of this journey for nothing. Madame Thomas suggests stopping at the pharmacy in Lieuvillers... they open a door for me and I recover my spirits a bit... a horse-man gallops up — Captain Forgeron... his smile disappears at the sight of the empty vehicle and tears come to his eyes as he says, 'This is impossible to understand.'

Later in the day we set out for Clermont... the captain meets at Étrechy a lieutenant whose wife has also disappeared.

'Ladies lost... that no longer amounts to anything,' said the customs man at Clermont. 'Many married people are in trouble rushing around after novelties.' This comforts the captain... he is assured: 'Army wives... they are always found again... they travel twelve kilometres on foot between villages... peasants show them the way... they can't help getting somewhere, and then you can pick them up.'

Authority can be extended no farther... the gendarmes content themselves with pointing out suspects and growling.

January 10

I am in bed with an acute attack of enteritis... the surgeons stuff me with opium and they have put on my stomach a broad bandage to keep me warm. The Forgeron family arrived at Étrechy after twenty-eight hours of traveling... they are very much bewildered. The little boy leaped through the door of the omnibus to kiss his father. 'We came here to see a cousin,' he cried, 'and then we found papa.' As for the old Bordelaise servant, she declared that a château like Pronleroy is worse than a barracks.

February 12

Return of the 129th from the Camp de Mailly. This time Colonel Lepetipas will stay in the château. The regiment arrived with flags flying... the men in a half-circle in the courtyard... the colonel, at one side, rides up the avenue with a group of officers on horseback, who salute with swords... the drums beat *aux Champs*... the men break into the *Marseillaise*. The revolutionary hymn produces no longer the sinister effect it used to have on us... the 'impure blood' is no longer ours, but the Boches'.

February 24

Divers bodies of troops passing through... then calmness and solitude. I take advantage of this freedom to go sometimes to Paris. On the road near Angivilliers are Moroccan troops... blacks with a savage air. They sleep in the snow, their heads resting on piles of rocks. My horse takes fright, makes a leap, comes down upon a group of sleepers... the blacks leap to their feet, draw their knives, and cover us with insults.

In the train I hear the news of the battle of Verdun... according to the first *communiqués*, it seemed no different from any other battle. At Paris they were anxious... the German attack seemed formidable... if we fall back only a few kilometres, that will be fine!

April 2

A new billet: a battalion from the train... several officers. We have been hearing the cannon fearfully loud for the last three days.

This battalion comes from Arras, where the English are taking over the trenches... we are preparing for an attack in the direction of Soissons... the district swarms with soldiers.

May 14

Germaine Mercier assists me to prepare the room for Madame Lafourcade, who is coming from Angers to see me, not sorry to make a little visit to the front.

I do several errands in the city, buy cherries, then go to the station. The train from Paris is signaled, but no one alights. At last I see Marie Lafourcade, very stylish in a little hat trimmed with mauve, in the middle of vast packages and the precious jewel-box which she has brought from Angers... all this in the hands of a soldier she has requisitioned.

I direct her to the captain of gendarmes, to whom I have previously given notice. She has a nurse's card of the U.F.F., but it is stamped on the face instead of on the back!! Marie argues and comes out triumphant; but behold another... the station is a regular hornet's nest... this fellow is a trap-setter. The orderly doesn't want to let me pass. I had thought that the visé of the chief of the post on my pass would be sufficient. I have to leave Marie and her luggage and stand in line at the door of the captain's office. At last they consent to let me get back into my carriage.

June 12

Another billet, the most cumbrous that ever was... platforms of bridges carried on trailers behind six horses... long flat floats which cannot turn in the courtyard, where all the

paths come together. Horses collide and take fright... non-coms. swear and curse and insult each other. The captain arrives, restores order, and points out the positions. The officers except the captain are quartered with Madame Dupérroux.

June 21

At the lower end of the village I met troops who are passing through the country without encamping. A non-com., very smiling, talked with me during a short halt. It is the marching regiment of the Foreign Legion. It is coming down from Lassigny, where it has held trenches for four months... they are marching toward the west, where many troops are concentrating for an attack. The roads are covered with convoys, artillery, and divisions moving about. Those who are passing by now are the American volunteers. I ask if there are many of them... 'More than a hundred' is the reply.

June 28

There is no way of obtaining manual labor, either civil or military... all agricultural permits are withdrawn as a result of a movement taking shape toward the north. Trains of cannon and munitions are passing night and day. My head keeper Voisenet begins, with a very ill-grace, to turn the hay with feminine help.

July 1

At eight in the evening we saw an *escadrille* of the Fourteenth Air Corps pass... at nine-thirty, as we were closing the northern windows, I noticed little balls of fire in the sky. Was it our airships bombing some strategic point? It is too far away for us to hear the reports. At the left there is a reddish gleam, probably a fire; at the right, a very white light coming from a searchlight. The little balls of fire

continue to dance in the black sky... on the right an intense red light flares up and grows, like the discharge from the crater of a volcano, and illumines the whole horizon with a gigantic purple Bengal light, always without the slightest sound. I wait, for I should like to see the *escadrille* return.

July 2

First success of the Franco-British offensive... capture of Dompierre, Becquencourt, and Fay, in the outskirts of Péronne. The staffs at Amiens have started for the front... the Colonial divisions also have left their camp to go north.

False reports are in circulation... Amiens evacuated, Montdidier burned. A railway employee, who has just come from that region, says that everything is quiet there... But who sows these seeds of panic?

There is much talk about the air squadrons, which from the 30th of June to the 1st of July have bombarded Roye and blown up German munition *dépôts*.

July 9

The capture of Péronne is announced, and then denied the next day.

Torrential rain... all the hay is so drenched that it will be necessary to turn it once more.

At the end of my breakfast, Jeanne announces: 'An officer asks for madame. I told him that madame was at table. He will return at one o'clock.' I cudgel my brain to think who it can be. From the great hall I see the shadow of a small slender officer crossing the courtyard. The lieutenant enters, salutes, and I invite him to be seated.

'Have you come about a billet?' I ask.

'Oh, not at all. I will introduce myself, and my name will tell you who I am and why I have come — Gérard de Pronleroy.'

'Of Cour de Broc!... You have come to visit the château

of your ancestors. I have met you in La Sarthe; also at the Coutades'; I belong to the Foucaults of La Grifferie.'

He interrupts:

'I know — I know... and I wanted to say to you, in my own name and in the name of my family, how happy we are to know that Pronleroy is in your hands.'

'You have already been here, I think?'

'Several years ago... the then owners did not permit me to visit them... I saw only the park... from which I had to slink away like a malefactor.'

'I will show you whatever you want to see.'

'That will give me so much pleasure! We are glad madame is so attached to the cradle of our family.'

I show M. Pronleroy all the salons, the wings, the bedrooms — even my own, which I never show. He goes into ecstasies over the beauty of the woodwork of the door-frames and of the mantelpieces, some of which still bear the three anchors of the Lancry-Pronleroy.

He wants to go up into the attic to see the eaves, the machinery of the clock on the façade, the hidden staircases, the hiding-places. I show him the catalogue of the Perrot sale.

'All this furniture dates from our time... my grandfather sold the place furnished.'

We look together at the fine portrait of Louis XIV in the large drawing-room. It is a tradition among the Pronleroyes that *le Roi Soleil* passed through here in the course of the Flemish wars and pronounced the place 'very agreeable.' There is a souvenir, more definite, because it left traces. A Prince Royal of Saxony, Maximilian, hunting on the Condé estate, lost his road in the forest of Chantilly and was found by the keepers of Pronleroy, who took him back to the château exhausted and trembling with cold. The Prince received such cordial hospitality that he asked to be the godfather of the child that the lady of the château was

expecting; and after that time, the eldest children of the Lancry family were called Max or Maxime. When he returned to Germany, the Prince sent a superb service of Saxon ware bearing the arms of the Pronleroy. This service, which was entrusted to their agents to look after, was lost at the sale of the château in 1810. On their departure, the Pronleroy took almost nothing, naturally attaching no importance to what they called 'old stuff.' The main part of the gate, with the Pronleroy arms, which was also left, disappeared, no one knows when.

We talk then of the Revolutionary period.

The château belonged at that time to a widow... the heir, a child of eight years, was never either denounced or disturbed. The storm passed over without any other pillage than the melting of the lance-heads over the gate, as smacking too much of feudalism. The heir, Max Pronleroy, lived in great style... there was much heavy card-playing at Beauvais, and he had also an apartment in Paris on the rue Royale. In short, he ruined himself like so many others, and as he had sworn an oath never to cross the threshold of his ancestors except as the owner, he jumped through the window of the little pink salon when it became necessary for him to give up the château he loved so well. Great bunches of parchments, priceless objects left in the attics, were sold at auction in 1900... this M. Gérard learned too late.

I walk with M. de Pronleroy in the park... he discovers the lake which he had known nothing about... in the kitchen garden he admires my beans and my potatoes.

'In the Cour de Broc, my brother Maxime had little dwarf *petits pois* planted on the terrace as a border in place of flowers, to play a trick on my sister, who continued to have the paths raked and graded.'

We talk of the war. In the two years that he has been among the people in camps, he has discovered the excellence of people of low rank... the patriotism of the girls of Lor-

raine delights him... they call *embusqués* those who are in repose three kilometres from the front.

He believes, as I do, in the future of a landed aristocracy, in families rooted in the ground, in the absolute duty of gentlemen to live upon their estates... people have lived too much the easy-going, amusing life of Paris. He asks me for information concerning the people, who seem to him savage enough. Meanwhile, old men who remember things come out on the doorstep to see a Pronleroy pass by.

I invite him to tea, but he refuses... he must be at his billet at four o'clock.

In kissing my hand, he displays all the courtly manners of his race. Despite the threadbare coat, his coarse, dusty shoes, his air of extreme weariness, he is truly a lord of Pronleroy in whom the new châtelaine salutes Old France... a time... a country when people knew how to respect that something sacred which is the cradle of a family, the right of the seigneur which comes from the heart of the ages, and which a deed of sale is not enough to efface.

July 15

During Mass, Raymonde Guislain, to whom the news had been given with brutal frankness that her husband had been killed at Verdun, shut herself up in her house, and, tying up her eighteen-months-old baby in her apron, threw herself into a well... she was up to her neck in water when she took fright and called for help. They broke open the door, and took her out, but she had gone mad. The child was dead. Still more victims of the war!

July 17

Marie announces that there are some Englishmen coming.

'Does the courier speak French?'

'Oh, yes, very well.'

I run downstairs and ask of a khaki silhouette that I

see in the kitchen: 'Are you arranging billets for English troops?'

'Oh, no, not English; it is the First Moroccan Tirailleurs... they will arrive in half an hour.'

I had been picking over black currant leaves... in my haste I lost the key of my room in the leaves, which are drying in the garret... no way to put on a suitable dress. I go to wash my hands and fix my hair in Jeanne's room.

In the great hall I find a very young captain, very dandified in a khaki uniform; he is slender as a girl, a true wasp's figure drawn tight with a fawn-colored girdle, a multitude of crosses on his chest, an intelligent look, energetic, with an Arab complexion, deeper than his fair hair or his blue eyes, which gives him a curious appearance. He gives his name: 'Captain Gabet.'

He tells me that he wishes to present his respects to me and to receive my instructions for billeting. We go together into the courtyard, and the officer makes his notes of buildings which I desire to reserve.

The commandant and other officers arrive on horseback. I bid them welcome... they follow me into the great hall and we talk. They have come from the furnace of the Somme. Their regiment has lost at Belloy-en-Santerre half of its effective force, thirty officers killed, wounded, or missing. Beside them, the Foreign Legion was badly hit in a bloody engagement on the 14th; it lost Alan Seeger, a famous American poet, one of the striking figures of the volunteers from the New World, so fearless under fire.

The telephone people arrive, and I must also assign quarters to them... the orderlies demand sheets.

We put two ladders end to end in order to get through my window and open from the inside the door of my bedroom, which will enable me to get my bunch of keys. A walk with the lieutenant to see the rosebushes in the kitchen garden... he is sure that the blossoms will come

through very soon, and after that we will drive the Boches over the frontier very quickly. He says that the thunder of an unprecedented artillery preparation has put them in a most peculiar state of bewilderment... they have become deaf, and the third day did not even hear the cannon.

About six o'clock, I met in the corridor a commandant with a very distinguished officer, who introduces himself: 'Captain de Courson de la Villeneuve'... he asks me if my maiden name was Hercé; I reply that I am La Marquise de Foucault de Malembert.

Rain falls in floods... the officers wander about the corridors, not knowing what to do. I take them to the billiard-room, where I give them books and newspapers.

July 18

It seems that there was a row in the courtyard last evening... some of the men took out their knives and one of them came near getting killed... the orderlies suggest that the women from the kitchen stay in the château at night... the Sidis are not the quietest sort.

I hear a cataract. I look out... the sky is clear, but the commandant's Negro orderly is emptying the water from the bathtub onto the piazza! I inform him that that is not done in a château. He is so upset that, to comfort him, I compliment him on his two medals... he laughs, showing all his white teeth, like a child.

July 21

My daughters have written to me to send them in a hurry a pass to come into the war zone. The line of Creil has been closed to civilians since the battle of the Somme. A lieutenant proposes to escort me to the military bureau of Saint-Just for these papers, with a letter of identification from the commandant.

As we are starting, a sub-lieutenant — the man who has

had a bullet through the head — joins us, and asks to go with us. The two officers are curious to know my impressions, as the 'lady of the château,' during the invasion, while I try to make them talk about the battle.

'But we see nothing... the line of fire seems deserted. All the combatants are buried in the trenches.' They are heartsick of this war of asphyxiation and being burned alive. The lieutenant has been caught twice in those waves of gas in which one feels as if one were dying. He speaks of the wounded, who are so afraid of falling into the hands of the Boches that they see men wounded in the leg or the foot hopping along behind the army for miles.

The transport officer gives me the papers which will permit my daughters to come without delay, which leaves the question simply of securing stamps at the mayor's office on the telegram in which I tell them to start.

July 22

Luncheon with the officers on leave who have returned from Paris. The two captains, Courson and Gabet, perfumed and with their hair arranged to the last point of style, seem very playful. Courson thinks only of the pleasures of the table at his home in Larue.

'At least, that is what he says,' adds Captain Pomarès.

Gabet, for his part, has been in a place which he dares not name to me, and which I ought not to know — at La Scala — to see a revue. He has reports from Paris through the medium of a relative at the Ministry... we must expect a winter campaign and Verdun will fall in three weeks.

July 24

We talk of the departure of the Tirailleurs, but their artillery has not yet arrived... they will go in the direction of Lassigny.

We meet every day for luncheon... we smoke and talk...

Captain Pomarès talks about his Basque country, his dear Pyrenees. All the officers would like to take a trip to Dinard... where can they catch the nice wound that will send them to one of those hospitals where they have so much fun? There is no middle course in this war... the women are admirable... or else shamelessly.

July 25

I go to Paris to meet my daughters, who are being brought to me from Orléans.

July 28

The order to leave has been given to-night... at eight o'clock the commandant, Captains Gabet and Pomarès, send for me... they are in campaign uniforms with the yellow cap over their ears... they thank me most amiably. Captain Gabet leaps on his horse, which prances under the lindens, joins his machine-gunners, and shouts his orders in a harsh voice, very different from his drawing-room tones.

August 6

This morning we hear the cannon louder than usual... the reports are nearer, and the humming of airplane motors. Denyse in a low pitiful voice asks me what it is. 'Probably exercises in firing... it comes from Clermont way.'

A tremendous report. I put my head out the window and see something like packages of white down floating through the air... it is shrapnel.

The roaring of the motors increases, and suddenly there is a report just above us... everything in the château trembles... the battle of airplanes goes on over our heads... whistling of machine guns... the German airships fly toward Lassigny. The reports from the anti-aircraft guns follow their route... then we see one of the two big birds descend very rapidly with smoke around it. The other comes down

also... it is not a giddy fall, but a swift swoop downward — *en vol plané*. We haven't time to be afraid, but only for the thought: Why do they come firing at each other above my roof? Their bombs will set fire to my beautiful house.

August 7

While we are lunching, a man's voice calls from outside... no one is in the courtyard... I turn back toward the front and find myself face to face with General Martin in full uniform, with his finest gold-embroidered cap. We are in the very modest garb of pickers of beans, and our harvest is drying in the sun in a great basket which blockades the steps.

Suzanne prepares tea... we ask questions about the battle in the air yesterday. All the general knows is that a Boche was taken in flight at Roye, the alarm bugle was blown at Ressons to send the people to the cellars, and the result was that the whole population came out in the street to watch the fight.

We talk of the offensive upon the Somme that has been stopped... it is to be taken up again, says the general. He has been at Corbie to inspect the organization of the supplies... it is the same admirable transportation system throughout as at Verdun... automobiles passing night and day in both directions at regular intervals, roads lighted by electricity, sunken roads for pedestrians, vehicles with animal traction... Territorials to repair the roadway as it is torn up... officers posted at cross-roads to direct the crossings... railroads and concrete platforms for the heavy artillery... and all that work carried out in six weeks.

Thursday, August 31

We are celebrating the final return of Simone to the château... gifts on the table, champagne for dessert, deputations of children, those of the Catechism classes, great and

small, little brats of the shopkeepers, choir children whom my daughters have taught to make the responses in Mass, Marcel, who alone is the staff of the château, the young village girls... all this crowd bring bouquets and compliments to my daughter. We feed these youngsters and drink to the health of Simone. In happier times we had talked about a ball to celebrate her return.

September 25

M. Dupérourx informs us that Captain Specel has been killed on the Somme. He was a Southern braggart, a street arab... he received at the inn the news of his appointment to the Second Colonials... he turned pale as a ghost with terror, then pulled himself together... he had expected to play at war, and had found himself caught in his own trap, but he paid heroically with his life. He leaves a pretty young widow and two little boys... how many dead already among the officers who have visited the château!

October 2

Leave Pronleroy to take my younger daughters back to their boarding-school... to amuse Simone a little by a short stay in Paris.

October 6

A war Paris overburdened with wounded and mutilated men, and officers on leave. Despite the numerous dead in all families, few people in mourning... the army esteems it a glory to fall on the field of honor... the public must not be saddened by crêpe veils. Stores overflow with people... articles of luxury, innumerable trumpery gewgaws, and triple prices. The concerts and theaters show audiences, half khaki and half blue. I take Simone to see Lakmé at the Opéra Comique, an Indian gypsy dressed in jewels over her gilded skin in hieratic dances.

We are present at the grand morning meeting at the Sorbonne to celebrate the Roumanian alliance. Speech by the Secretary of State, who speaks well. He patters about the benefits to the public, about the glories of the campaign, the success of the loan. While one passes over in silence the disaster of Charleroi and the check of our attacks, one can prattle about the straightening out of affairs on the Marne, the heroism of the warlike race that we are!

October 10

Tea with my daughter at Rumpelmayer's. A foreign colony... magnificent furs open over corsages of tulle and rows of pearls, hats sparkling with jewelry... a few uniforms, especially British, not a few idlers, dressed up and perfumed, their hair combed back *loin du front*, according to the phrase with double meaning, that one hears now. Twitterings as in a birdcage... the same worldly chatter... the same luxury that prevailed up to the day before the war, with amazement I see here again.

October 26

Announcement of a regiment; they want eight officers' rooms... the men arrive in a storm just at nightfall.

Sunday, October 29

Uninterrupted rain. Invitation from the officers... a day of billiards, a bridge table installed, many little cakes at tea... twelve officers pass the afternoon with me.

November 1

It still rains... between Mass and Vespers conversation with the officers... the Roumanians are getting beaten... they have lost Constanza... their occasional offensives were bad tactics.... The retaking of Douaumont has raised the morale of the Zouaves. The blockade, the famine in

Germany... all bluff... They talk about the deposition of Constantine and of the accession to the throne of his brother George.

The order for departure has just been given... the Zouaves start for the camp at Crèvecœur. The officers thank me warmly and say that with Senlis it is the best billet they can remember.

November 3

Departure of the Zouaves at five o'clock. At eight o'clock the Moroccan Colonial Artillery arrives in the rain. Numerous bedrooms for officers to be provided... these gentlemen are installed for the present in the billiard-room.

November 10

We heard yesterday from the kitchen two loud explosions. We learned to-day that bombs, dropped from airplanes on Saint-Just, killed eight persons, women and soldiers on leave, and wounded a good many. Estrées-Saint-Denis was favored with bombs, and Amiens had eighty for her share... of these latter there is talk in the newspapers. Germaine Mercier's brother saw near Amiens in the railway station quantities of human débris... an explosion the day before in the shell factory near the railroad had caused the catastrophe. Of this the newspapers did not breathe a word, any more than of the never-ending bombardments at Amiens.

November 11

Arrival for luncheon of a very smart dragoon regiment.

November 18

Arrival of a Colonial reserve regiment; I welcome the colonel at the top of the staircase and submit to his criticism upon 'the coldness of these great châteaux which are not habitable without central heating.'

Christmas, 1916

A war Christmas tree, hurriedly decorated by Marie-Louise Mallard... a box of bonbons and two articles for each of the seventy children invited. We have made ten tarts and sugared fritters for luncheon... the bell for Vespers hurries the ceremony a little. The midnight Mass has been forbidden, as in the whole zone, because of the raids by airplanes which become more and more frequent. But the Mass at dawn is as brilliantly illuminated as at a night service.

December 26

We are leaving Pronleroy. Simone cannot pass her first winter, as a young girl just out of boarding-school, in the barracks which the château has become. We are going to Angers, where she will find friends, kindred, and the social life which a girl needs at her age... forgetfulness of the war as far as possible. I have left open all the rooms which officers occupy during their encampment. Isabelle has the keys to the linen closets and has taken charge of this business of running a military boarding-house.

Immediately after passing the ridge of Fief, the carriage is stopped at the imperious command of a soldier. He raises his helmet on his gun... the firing practice which covered the road was stopped. We pass on. At Plessier we run into a regiment which is arriving there for rest... Territorials, not young... exhausted and covered with mud, they let themselves drop upon the bank of wet grass, their feet in the brook. We have to stop and let the guns and the regimental wagons pass. Finally, we cut through the line under the maledictions of the drivers. At the foot of the hill at Saint-Just, we meet a band and stragglers... a party of children has taken possession of the trumpets and drums! They are trying, very unskillfully, to strike with the drumsticks and blow into the mouthpieces.



LA MARQUISE DE FOUCAULT
From a photograph taken before the War

I go to the intendancy to arrange for the requisitions for my grain; the officer has gone out, and I explain that I must have payment before I leave.

‘You are going? You have the luck to be going away?’

The lieutenant returns, very agreeably pays me the four hundred francs, and assures me that in the next week I shall have all the military man-power that I need for sowing and planting and reaping.

Our tribulations are at an end for a few months. We are returning to civilian life. My house on the rue Desjardins is unoccupied. I have had four rooms furnished, and my friend Madame Lafourcade has arranged for a staff of servants for me. My daughter and I will pass the winter in repose far from the front.

1917

March 13, 1917

AFTER the snow of day before yesterday comes the soft breath of a dull gray spring for our return to Pronleroy, an easy journey. Saw nothing of interest on the way except a train of *matériel* coming from the north... airplanes with wounded wings; automobiles decorated with mud and with wind-shields shattered; regimental wagons without wheels, and with twisted tires; and unidentifiable fragments of old iron which have been cannon and machine guns.

We try to obtain some provisions... no gasoline, butter only in little tin boxes at two francs for one hundred and twenty-five grammes. In the town of Saint-Just we pass regimental fodder wagons, and a few motors traveling like meteorites. Going out of Plessier, great placards... directions for the aviation camp at Ravenel. These are for the American aviators of the famous Escadrille Lafayette, who are encamped there. Their raids have victoriously put a stop to the incursions of the Boche airplanes, our coachman's wife tells us, she being always *au courant* of all that is being said and done in the neighborhood.

On the square at Plessier are rows of guns and strange platforms mounted on two wheels, the whole painted in sky blue, with one end touching the ground, the other pointing skyward — unfamiliar machines of which I have not as yet been able to learn either the name or the use.

Troops at Lieuvillers, at Angivilliers. At Pronleroy soldiers are swarming; little girls cry out to us 'Bonjour.' Isabelle informs us that the Third Regiment of Zouaves left the château yesterday; the Forty-Sixth Artillery arrived this morning, and to-morrow the colonel and higher officers of a line regiment are expected... they have reserved all the

best rooms; which means that the colonel and lieutenant-colonel of the Forty-Sixth will sleep to-night in the attics at the mayor's house. I investigate the injury done in my absence; two hundred and fifty forest trees cut down, to say nothing of the hedges, by a regiment of artillery.

March 14

Newspapers speak of the fine advance of our troops. Talked with the postman; he says that Lassigny and Roye are retaken and passed, that our regiments have reached Candor. The enemy falls back without fighting. We have brought down a Zeppelin near Estrées.

I walk about to see the damage done during the winter. No doors or windows left in the Tuilerie. The great doors of the barn have fallen, but have not yet been burned; it is only a matter of replacing them on their hinges.

We are reading, my daughters and I, the Russian romance of Vogüé. I am finishing the last chapter when they tell me that the 416th Regiment is asking for billets. I go to see them, in very ill-humor, not yet readapted to my trade of innkeeper. I offer the small dining-room and the army kitchen which I have had set up in the staff's wing. All this does not suit... the lieutenant will try elsewhere. I have set Marcel and Denyse to picking up the branches of the trees which have been cut and a donkey to carry the fagots. I am getting ready to start for the wood when—bang! my blind goes... a metre more to the right and the windows of my room would have been blown to bits! It's the soldiers who are playing at *ballon rond* against the front windows. I shout: 'You're not to play ball under my windows... if you want to play, go out in the field where you won't smash things!'

I see the men off, grumbling but obedient. They cut sticks to mark the bases for the game.

I go to the woods to work at my fagots... the sunlight is

bright... it is regular summer weather. Simone finds pleasure in picking up the branches... by assisting and urging them on, I succeed in getting five wagonloads of wood carried home. As I am following the last one to pick up the wood which falls on the way, I meet an officer in full dress, who comes to pay me a ceremonial visit, and is as embarrassed as I am at the bunch of sticks which I hold in my arms ... he courteously offers to carry it for me, but Isabelle relieves me of it and ushers us into the little dining-room. He is a young captain, very polite, lodged in the château, who comes to thank me for the hospitality granted him. The dining-room is in horrible disorder... empty bottles and papers everywhere. The artillerists who go to-morrow ate there.

Sunday, March 16

Departure of the 416th in a hurry as early as possible. I start for Mass. Simone comes to fetch me. It is another billet. I meet the officer who has charge of the arrangements; he is a very young captain — the Fifteenth Dragoons. He has no need to say he belongs to the cavalry... that is self-evident, and he is charming, too, tall, slender, dark, with large, very blue eyes, and an air forceful enough for a marshal... with pleasing smile and nice teeth, and exquisite courtesy. He wishes to perform his duties at once ... he must get the best rooms for his colonel and for his commandant, M. de Chabaud-Latour, both very particular. I shall do the honors of the large dining-room for the meal. We look in there as we pass. Horror! I find there two telephonists, the rear guard of the artillery, the most devastating arm of the whole army. These men have thought it good to make a regular soldiers' post of this dining-room, to install wires on the woodwork, running around pictures and the tall china vases on the chimney-piece, and over the curtains, which are all rumpled. Furthermore, there are several

pairs of drawers freshly washed stretched on a wire, the water from which flows over the dining-table. The captain is as angry as I. He exclaims: 'A post of soldiers cannot remain here; this is an officers' apartment.' The telephonists, very polite, but a little disturbed, say that they will take away their apparatus at once... they ask only for a corner to leave them for a few hours. I point out Bouchez's quarters. I show the chambers in the staff wing, humiliated by their ruinous appearance.

'You see the state in which the officers of the 416th have put these in my absence!'

'Oh, madame, do not say officers... say a mob of Frenchmen *en campagne*! Many of those who have stripes are not really a part of what we continue to call the army. They have neither spirit nor manners, nor anything... under fire they are brave because they are French — the single point in common. This devastation... I am ashamed of it whenever I come in contact with it. They like to spoil, to destroy.'

I have the dining-room cleaned, the floor washed, the fire lighted, and the leaves put in the table — there will be twenty-one at dinner — give out tablecloths and napkins. I lead the captain through the salons to go to the end of the billiard-room to find the table leaves.

'What a perfectly delightful dwelling! Oh, what a beautiful portrait!' He stops in front of the lovely Second Empire lady that is my mother.

We talk of the officers of the cavalry: of d'Épenoux, who is in his regiment; of Rascas, now in the Oise; of a Froidefond whom he has met near Reims, orderly officer to a general. I say that I am very fond of the dragoons, a branch of the army that used to supply me with all my dancing partners.

'Yes, in the days of balls... when one had leisure to amuse one's self... will those times ever return again?'

We go to the mayor's office for news; they have posted up the dispatches: 'Noyon is taken; they have passed Péronne.' We are stupefied to feel ourselves delivered from the neighborhood of the enemy.

March 18

We visit La Neuville. A supply convoy is stationed there. It carries provisions for the half-starved people of the regions that are being freed. The 416th is encamped at La Neuville... it is impossible to understand these goings and comings of troops.

March 27

Nine o'clock in the morning. A lieutenant asks me for accommodations for a huge encampment — the Forty-Fifth Colonial, colonel and lieutenant-colonel, two commandants, most of the officers, and in addition a battalion of Senegalese. Everything decided and arranged.

I return to the château, when Marcel runs up to say the *adjutant* wants to force open the doors of my carriage-house and put my carriages in the courtyard. I go to him and ask, quite sharply: 'Who is the non-com. in command here?'

'I am.'

'I have authorized the placing of men in the buildings that are open. I reserve for my own use whatever is closed. It has been so in all the encampments.'

'But I must put my men somewhere.'

'There is plenty of room... have you put men in the Tuilerie?'

'No... where is it?'

I take him to it, and the soldiers exclaim: 'There is plenty of room here... It's only a question of knowing about it!'

I go to hunt up the officer. I ask for soldiers to put in place the doors and shutters of the Tuilerie, and the panels

of the barn door... the men will not be so cold. Very amiably he promises the work will be done that evening. Arrival of the flag with ceremony. A pretty march past with music being played and the *Marseillaise*. The flag is taken up to the colonel's chamber.

The officers enter. I have had a fire laid for them in the dining-room on condition that they should not put soldier telephonists there... no privates of any sort.

We go to the mayor's office for Simone's pass... she is going to see her sisters at Orléans. It depends now on the sub-prefect, of whom we are going to make the request.

On our return, Colonel Guillermin talks with us a little. The doors are to be put in place. I give him a little room where the soldiers may have a place to drink. As dinner is about to be served, the band arrives and is under the lindens. The battalion of Senegalese also marches into the courtyard. That line of Negroes clad in blue with steel helmets on their heads and long golden rings in their ears... it is one of the strangest spectacles I have ever seen. There is every kind of ethnographic specimen from the Black Continent. Some, with admirable classic features, have large graceful bodies and seem like Greek statues covered with ink. Another is the purest Egyptian type, with the delicacy of profile of a head from Memphis or Thebes, strange to see with that tinge of ebony. Some have the face of Berber or Moor... the majority have the bestial face of the gorilla — thick lips, flat nose. They pass, zealously keeping their alignment under the floods of reproaches of sergeants and white officers.

Then the band passes... a strange band with enormous instruments, the strings recalling the gypsy dulcimer; others are covered with bells; there are drums of every shape, and instruments of pottery full of small stones which they shake.

The wagons and machine guns are drawn by Negroes...

the supply carts sink in the mud. An officer who seems made of bronze, a half-breed... he speaks a dialect which seems difficult to pronounce... sends his blacks to the rescue and has the carts pulled straight by man-power, and the whole thing passes out of sight in the park. There are twelve hundred black soldiers. The poor creatures are so tired, they seem like great exhausted children, like benumbed birds.

'Here is France all frozen... here is me sick,' said a tall Negro who had let himself fall full length.

The orderlies of the Forty-Sixth and the sergeants speak to these poor devils as to beasts.

'Hey, you there, you black man, half white, and black as last year, go and get me a pitcher of water... bring me some wood!'

Chat with the two colonels... these battalions have come from a camp near Bordeaux.

The quartermaster has his say: 'They come too late, these fellows; they're good enough in pursuit, but under machine guns they are afraid.'

I struggle with the door of the great hall, which will not close. The colonel, who has some pretensions as a mechanic, sends for tools... taps, pulls... and the lock works. My joy is of short duration, for at seven-thirty the lock is broken again by the brutal hand of the orderlies.

The officers of the château have invited the commandant of the Senegalese to dinner... the cook, notified at the last moment, doesn't know which way to turn... he must be supplied with eggs for a monster omelet, additional plates and glasses.

March 30

Departure of the troops at six o'clock. The colonel sends his regrets to me that he is not able to salute me; the commandant of the Senegalese makes me a little visit in the morning in the corridor.

Take Simone to Clermont. It is thought that a large part of the population of the Noyon district, now reconquered, is to be placed in our neighborhood, their devastated country presenting no means of sustenance... these poor devils, who are repellent with filth, have the itch.

Have been to the sub-prefecture at Clermont to assure myself of military assistance against the time of heavy farm work. Saw on the road to Lieuvillers, where I always go to my notary, a camp of Senegalese. They were being drilled in marching, and in running after a ball. They marched awkwardly, sluggishly, without unison. Talked on my return to Negroes working at wood-cutting... there were ten of them to carry three sticks... they all cried out to me: '*Bonzou, la Madame.*'

April 1

Henriette Faroux, who is living for the moment at Ravenel, came to see me. The aviation camp there contains four squadrons. The officers are quartered in wooden barracks; they have dug, in the slopes along the road, deep shelters where they go down when Boche airplanes drop bombs in passing. The Escadrille Lafayette, made up of American volunteer pilots, takes to the air whenever the weather permits; its aces, Kiffin Rockwell and Lufbery, have brought down numerous enemy airships in the neighborhood of Roye and Lassigny. The squadrons have followed the advance of the troops in Noyon, redoubling their raids, shooting from very low at the stragglers. The pilot McConnell, whom Henriette knew well, was brought down at Ham on the 19th; they believe that he is dead. There used to be French commanders in these American squadrons; that of the Lafayette organization was Lieutenant de Laage de Meux, a brave man, covered with decorations.

There was earlier the Escadrille de Cigognes. Guynemer had brought down ten German airmen during his stay at

Ravenel. He went out almost every day to watch the line toward Roye and Lassigny; he brought down his thirty-first Boche near Estrées-Saint-Denis... with his machine gun out of commission at the end of the battle, he flew over his enemy and came so near that he forced him down. The soldiers set fire to the Albatross for which the troops were lying in wait. In the camp they particularly celebrated that victory. It is said that the English are going to carry on at Ravenel when the squadrons go on leave.

April 3

Another day of cold and snow from 5 A.M. to 6 P.M. The snow falls in flakes as big as apples; the lawn is an immaculate carpet twenty centimetres thick.

April 15

Still snow like a cloth as in winter. They say that all the spring wheat is frozen in the fields.

Sunday, April 29

Since the sudden death of our curé, we have to go to La Neuville to attend services. My daughter Simone takes the flock of children, a score or more, to the High Mass.

This evening, at six o'clock, in the course of a dull cannonading, there are some sharp reports which draw nearer. These come from above... it must be a Boche airman bombing. Then we hear a grumbling of motors and two, four, eight, airships rise and start off in haste, coming down in the direction of Clermont... it seems from the village they saw the squadron of Ravenel go up... one of its planes took fire in the air and landed on the road to Saint-Just. The point bombed is not known, but it is a convoy of munitions without doubt.

May 3

Simone on the road to La Neuville met some troops which have the downcast look that indicates a night of

battle. The cannonade continues vigorously and many army motors and convoys pass through Pronleroy.

May 13

The following idle talk of soldiers of the neighborhood returning from the offensive on the Aisne: Marchand and Gouraud have been trampled underfoot; troops have been driven to the assault with unprimed grenades, of which not one had burst; convoys of munitions had been taken, their loads replaced with spoiled cartridges; the slaughter around Craonne was frightful.

July, 1917

Our life has resumed its normal course; no longer passing of troops. Monotonous life... ill at ease... no work at hand... difficulty about money... just the usual condition behind the lines in time of war.

November 15

Crushing Austrian advance against Italy... disaster of Caporetto... they say that Venice is likely to be taken.

On the little line from Estrées-Saint-Denis trains of munitions destined for the Alps pass all night.

November 25

If the news of the war is not good, the political news is better.

Here at last is a Clemenceau Ministry. With a Premier so energetic, affairs may change. We have had nothing but talkers for a long time.

November 28

Returned from Paris yesterday... postman tells me of a coming encampment... the courier arrives: I am to have the colonel and his staff; three rooms and a dining-room to

supply. It is the Tenth Cuirassiers. Colonel Francolini greets me... people going and coming in the courtyard to arrange quarters for the horses.

Tea in the billiard-room with bread and butter and dry cakes... the officers absorb cups upon cups... we have to make another supply of tea... the colonel is decidedly gloomy.

'The Russians fraternize in the trenches with their enemies of yesterday... they are about to patch up an armistice. For the moment the war map is not satisfactory. We have to send men to Italy. The front before Venice is detestable... very difficult to occupy without leaving gaps ... not only have we no offensive nor the end of war in prospect, but in the spring a formidable German attack will be upon us.... And then the army set free on the Russian front will flow back upon us... tens of thousands of prisoners will be released by the Boches. The Americans are arriving... there is already one among the wounded. They have put a lot about him in the newspapers to prove that America is at the front.'

December 17

Intense cold. We start for Paris, Simone and I, and make our purchases for a Christmas tree before going to Angers... the winter season in the country seems long to a young girl of eighteen.

December 20

Leave Paris in a light snow. No tickets to La Neuville are sold... the reason, snow.

As we move away from the capital, the white carpet thickens... at Saint-Just they tell me that a derailment makes progress impossible. I am told that at Maignelay there is a metre and a half of snow on the road. Sadly embarrassed, we look forward to having to sleep at the

inn, when my keeper appears with a jolting cart. He has had the horse shod, warmed bricks, and heaped up rugs. We lay in a stock of bread... the baker can no longer serve us at Pronleroy. The horse begins to slip upon the road... Menet gets down and takes him by the bridle. We pass unhitched, abandoned convoys... a military post which is re-shoeing its horses on the road. On the long hill of Plessier my horse begins again to slip upon the ice, and the man staggers at his side. I pull hard upon the reins... neither man nor beast falls, but a fall is imminent. Two hundred metres of constant sliding... Siberian countryside, snow as far as one can see, low-lying, lead-colored clouds. Road deserted... on the down grades the snow has piled up between the embankments to a thickness of more than a metre and a half. Then we leave the road to pass through fields along a track, between two walls of snow higher than the horse. At last, slide upon slide, after three hours of travel at a footpace, here we are, half frozen, in the courtyard of the château, where a lantern swinging on a post guides us. We reach the door without accident. Dinner and a fire are ready. During our absence the troops have passed through in the normal way... the officers have left instructions to thank me for the rooms provided.

December 21

We are still very stiff from the cold of our journey... the Fifteenth Artillery arrives to encamp. Three officers' rooms are required. The usual bustle of the installation of troops. I have the Christmas fir tree cut and try to reserve my horse's stable.

Sunday, December 23

Ice... impossible to send to fetch the priest from Estrées. Simone starts on foot for the Mass at La Neuville. While I am decorating the tree, there comes a very well-set-up

quartermaster... he is arranging quarters for some artillery which will soon arrive and will go to-morrow. The First Army is coming down from the North for a stay of one day... we shall certainly have a temporary chaplain for the Christmas service. We are joined by Mademoiselle Caux, who comes from Cressonsacq to help us prepare the tree, bake the tarts, and lay the table.

The children arrive when nothing is ready... the battalion makes its entry into the courtyard at the same time... the children of Cressonsacq join us... we feed our little guests in parties of twenty... there are eighty children. Distribution of toys and awards for attendance at Catechism... Very pretty Christmas carols. Such a lovely tree, and an old-fashioned Breton Noël.

1918

January, 1918

WINTER passed at Angers with my daughter. Several trips to Pronleroy to look after the property. Simone stays with our relatives, the Coutades, during my absence.

No social life, but meetings and luncheons with young girls where they work for the soldiers at the front, wounded and refugees. Concerts and performances for the benefit of war work.

February 1

At Pronleroy no sign of much damage, although the encampments have been numerous. The tax-collector pays me for the quartering of troops and the requisitions of wood.

The work in the kitchen garden and orchard has gone on normally. To the north there has been severe cannonading and often airplane raids at night; but, after all, there has been no particular menace to this region... I can return to my rest at Angers.

Paris, February 4

Passed through Paris again... the papers are full of the catastrophe of the 2d. Seventy airplanes over the capital pouring bombs on the hospitals, markets, and cemeteries... sixty-one people killed and twice that number wounded. The small tradesmen, the unimportant people, are in consternation. People of the world, whose quarter has not been afflicted, are not so upset. Aunt de Chabot, who is a little deaf, has heard nothing... the concierge made her get up, and they took every one to the cellar.

Returning from La Neuilly, I take the tramway in order to pass one of the bombed houses. On the Avenue de la Grande Armée the house at the corner has been demolished

by a bomb... the roof and six floors have been sliced off with a clean cut, as one slices a piece of pie, stones of the roof and the beams encumber the sidewalk, strips of zinc from the roof are hanging like a wooden lid in the air. I notice in these apartments a piano cut in two, one of whose feet is hanging in emptiness; a chamber with a bed, a chest of drawers, and half a commode. The tenant of the fifth floor, the Vicomtesse de la Noue, was already on the stairway with her daughter, who had taken her little brother in her arms, at the moment of the explosion; the governess followed... she had an arm crushed which it was necessary to amputate.

March 3

Left Angers despite the protestations of my kinsfolk... they do not know what it means to belong to the zone of war... in the event of a German advance, it is impossible to leave Pronleroy in the hands of the servants... we must be there in case there is anything to do — any service to render. Simone will remain far from the sound of cannon, which shatters her nerves... with the Coutades first and then, if events do not happen too fast, at Orléans with her sisters. A cold leave-taking in the snow. I came near missing my train, the porter having missed his leap with the luggage. Forgot my army pass... there is no place for me on rue Rousselet... by favor, I get one of the attics on the sixth floor under the eaves of the Hôtel Jeanne d'Arc. The new refugees from the East are scattered everywhere.

Paris, March 8

It is said that Noyon is threatened... the factories of Creil evacuated, Compiègne sadly damaged by the bombardment. The Chabots urge me not to take my daughter back to the Oise... I have no desire to. I have made known in writing all my wishes in regard to my children, in case

I am caught in the zone of invasion. I take my meals on rue Rousselet, and after dinner I go up into Mademoiselle N.'s room. She has not appeared at dinner. Her mother says to me, 'Madame, you should return to the Jeanne d'Arc, otherwise you will be blockaded here. There is an alarm... the siren has just rung.'

At the same moment we hear the cannon, very far away. I put on my hat and go out quietly... people are at their doors looking up in the air. The vague roaring of a motor is heard, but nothing is to be seen. I turn into rue Oudinot, when I receive a blow in the breast. It is a stout, terrified lady who cries out: 'Where is Number 10? Where is Number 10? That's where the shelter is.' I put her on her feet and suggest that she look carefully for Number 10. There was nothing to fear for the moment. It was one of those intense darknesses which the bluish electric light does not pierce. I walk in the middle of the street to avoid stumbling on the curb.

At the Hôtel Jeanne d'Arc the manager, M. Ocard, the proprietor, his young daughters, the chambermaids, all very excited, are looking into the street... there are also two Poles in officers' uniforms... we stand under the *porte cochère* to try to see something. The cannon never cease — barrage fire from a great distance. I have the impression of a false alarm... that the Boche airships have turned back. The roaring becomes more definite... the squadron has passed over the barrage fire... one hears heavy dull sounds — the fall of bombs. A lady, a gentleman who carries in his arms a sleeping child, come from their house near by.

'We bring him here... we have changed our minds; the hôtel is stronger than our apartment.'

Everybody piles into the interior corridor of the *entresol*. I am rather pleased... very curious to see a raid upon Paris, and satisfied not to be afraid.

At eleven o'clock there is nothing more to be heard. I

have had enough of being shut into corridors. I go upstairs to my sixth floor. I find a captain and two gentlemen with their elbows at an open window... they urge me to look at the spectacle, which is magnificent. Musket shots, luminous points which constantly change, pursued by white lights of projectiles... the airplanes — ours. The cannonade replies... to the right toward the Louvre an enemy squadron advances, taken unaware, surrounded by luminous bombs, shrapnel; at the left, another squadron, also pursued, flying in our direction. Thunder from falling bombs, not far off. I put out my electric light... I rush to the stairway — this time it is serious. I go down five floors in the darkness, keeping tight hold of the rail... there are now only the commandant and his wife sleeping on chairs in the corridor. One hears snoring in a bedroom. Farther on, some Americans are drinking and making a devilish noise. A captain rings and knocks at the door... he has difficulty in getting it open... he is returning from the Théâtre de la Gaîté... the raid is a serious one — several houses have been blown up and he has seen the victims carried away. I cannot get rid of this impression of a false alarm... still, one hears the motors and the dull, terrifying noise of the bombing.

A chambermaid, who has been out on the balcony to look, rushes back into the hall, crying: 'Oh, it was horrible! Horrible! The things I saw.' The men tell her, in a very loud tone, in order to pacify her, that she can't have seen anything but the blinding glare of the searchlights and the rockets, but her terror is contagious... the commandant's wife begins to cry out... another woman weeps. I try to comfort them... so many raids have already passed over my head without damage. A lady draws her chaplet from her pocket. People returning from the theaters, the music-halls, exchange their impressions on going out into the street, not finding a taxi, the doors of the Underground closed, and the constant bursting of bombs. It is mid-

night... we can no longer hear anything. I am almost dead for sleep and I go back into my attic.

March 9

I take back to Pronleroy, as gardener, a discharged soldier, Duchesne. I have had favorable reports concerning his work at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. He arrives late at the Gare du Nord, loaded down with bundles.

At each wicket there are two to three hundred people... the terrified ones of last night... who seek to fly toward the north... it's like hide-and-seek. At Saint-Just Duchesne goes to have a little drink, which puts him altogether in good-humor... he gives tobacco to the *poilus*, calling them old pals.

I find, on our arrival, the courtyard well gravelled and beautifully raked in lozenge-shaped figures — very Louis XVI. Some army gardeners have passed that way. 'Why, yes, there was a camp here,' said Joséphine, handing me the keys.

March 11

While I write up my journal, the alarm is given by the camp buglers... all fires extinguished... noise of airplanes, louder than at Paris. They fly lower. I take my place at my window to see the barrage fire in front of us. The luminous beams of searchlights grope about the sky seeking the enemy, then a violent red light... the reports grow louder... a second *escadrille*, larger than the first, passes. I place my lamp between two doors of my entrance corridor and open my windows. At the other end of the château the commandant goes through the same maneuvers... we strike up an acquaintance.

'That bright red light, commandant?'

'A signal. They are signaling to each other... meanwhile the D.C.A. will hold itself in readiness.'

Red flowers bloom in the sky on all sides.

'The savages!' cries the commandant, shaking his fist at them. 'It's chilly... you must not risk taking cold. Let's shut the windows and go to sleep.'

March 12

Mass at nine-thirty said by a soldier-priest... few people present. The commandant tells me that the army theater is quartered in my barn... that there will be a great performance at two o'clock, and that he is reserving a seat for me near his own. He comes to fetch me... he is a little brown man, Southern, very gay. I enter the barn on his arm.

It has all the appearance of a real theater... raised stage, curtains of red velvet, row of acetylene footlights — which smell — decorations, and wings. A good orchestra and the programme announces *artistes* from the Française Odéon and the Palais Royal. The play consists of 'Alfred,' a farce with coarse jokes, stories of *amourettes*, of husbands deceived, of messengers beaten. The ladies — beardless soldiers well made up — appear from a distance rather pretty; dishabilles, very questionable — we see a night-dress under a dressing-gown. There is much kissing, and these *ladies* make eyes at the gentlemen as women never made eyes before; they assume for speaking little shrill voices, very high in register, and utter rather amusing shrieks of terror. The actors sing well; the music is catchy. The audience is most amusing to watch; all the officers of high rank are in the front row around my armchair, then the civil population from Pronleroy, babies on their mothers' arms, little children from six to eight, little boys just at the Catechism... all these laugh without understanding at the doubtful jests... the young girls purse their lips, laughing with an indifferent air; my gardener, Duchesne, applauds frantically; he has never been to such a show.

I compliment the actors and musicians at the close.

March 22

The Eighty-Second has gone. On the move since six o'clock this morning, they leave the château in an indescribably filthy condition.

Sunday, March 24

Every night raids have passed over our heads... one, two, three squadrons, one after another. This morning, Palm Sunday Mass... an aromatic odor throughout the church. A young priest from Alby officiates... he tells us about the heavy bombardment of Compiègne — the station destroyed, the roads blown up, three houses crushed from roof to cellar. There has also been a murderous raid by day in Paris, of which the papers do not speak. The dispatches from the hospital at Estrées say the English are in retreat.

March 25

In the night a raid over the château and over the woods; the *escadrille* goes away, comes back again... we learn in the morning that it bombarded a convoy on the Estrées road.

The British are in full retreat. The enemy has gained twenty kilometres, and Noyon is supposed to be surrounded. The English soldiers of the front line have met death heroically on the spot. The cavalry hastens up and regiments in automobiles with supplies and munitions... it is the endless chain of clearing the decks for battle. They say that the battalion of the Eighty-Second was in the line and almost destroyed. Madame Dupérour, returning from La Neuville, met the Third Dragoons passing through the village.

The regiment passed through Montier like a gale of wind, and marched on La Boissière Marquevillier. It was the junction with the English that had cracked and the British army had carried its retreating movement too far toward the west. There were no reserves at hand. The cavalry arrived from a distance at top speed. It seems that Noyon

has not been retaken, but simply burned by melinite shells which nothing can extinguish.

Paris is being bombarded by a piece called the 'Big Bertha,' which sends a tremendous shell every three quarters of an hour. It fires from a distance of one hundred and thirty-five kilometres. A newspaper which gave these details yesterday has been made to suspend publication. Estrées-Saint-Denis (six kilometres from us as a bird flies) was bombarded yesterday... ten dead and a number wounded. Is it our turn to be sprinkled to-night? The wind, and the storm which is blowing up, will perhaps prevent the evil Boche birds from coming out.

March 26

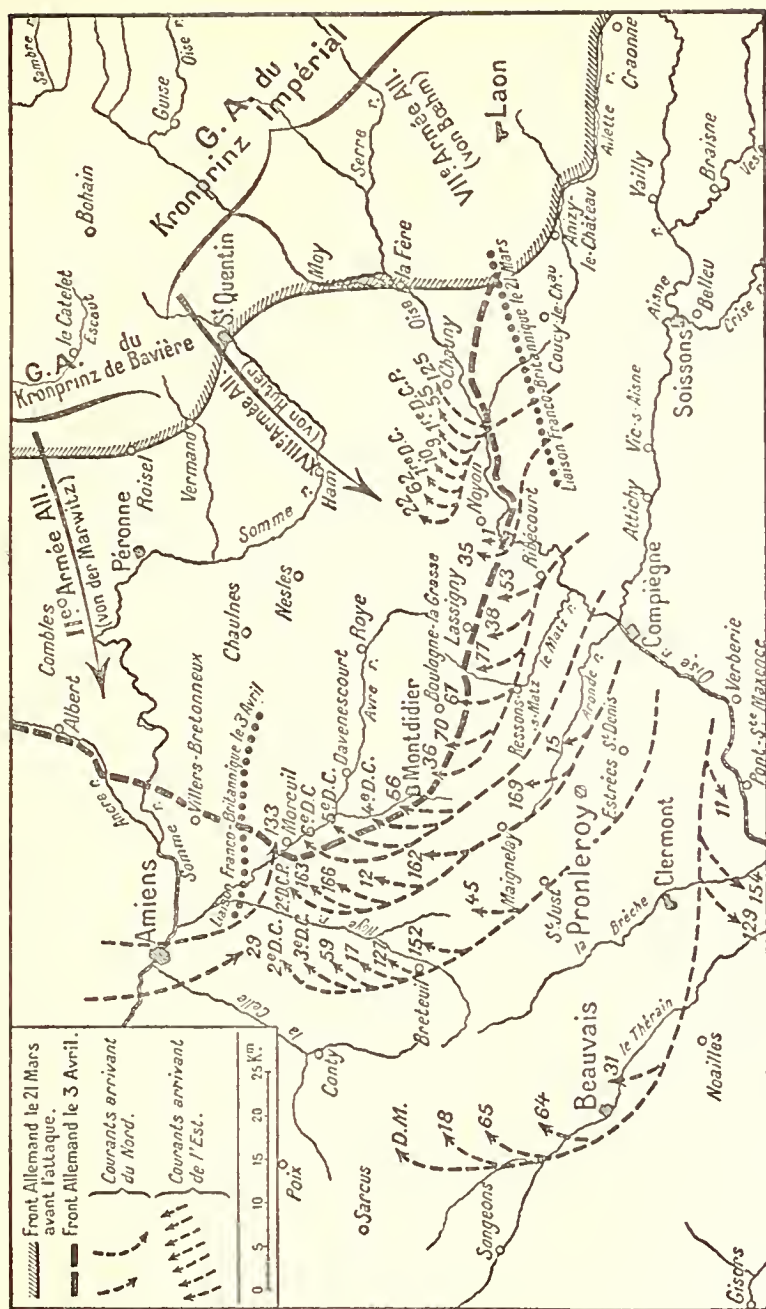
Have been to get the news at Madame Dupéroux's. A camion-driver said that Foch has already taken forty thousand prisoners. But there are so many fantastic rumors about on the roads — and the man was from the South! My keeper Menet, with whom I am very much dissatisfied, comes to tell me that he doesn't care to remain with a wife and child in a country where the Boches come. I reply that he is quite right, he had better go to-day. I will pay him what I owe him. He stands quite speechless, then hurls insulting words at me.

About four o'clock I met two English soldiers on horseback in the village, but they seemed confused and tired; they asked me, pointing, 'To Paris?' I pointed out the Saint-Just road... they didn't understand my explanations and started off at a gallop.

The evening barrage fire begins... an airplane flies over the château, turns about uncertainly, drops bombs very near at hand... it is after the convoys.

March 28

Terrific cannonade in the middle of the night. The line of fire approaches. In the morning, Juliette wakes me, to



THE SOMME RETREAT: OPERATIONS FROM MARCH 21 TO APRIL 3, 1918

bring me my breakfast, and tells me that Duchesne wants to speak to me at once.

‘Let him at least give me time to take my coffee.’

The cannonade increases until we can’t hear ourselves talk.

Duchesne is afraid; he wants to go away and have his account settled at once. It’s all these people who are flying along the roads that have given him these ideas.

I go down into the village for news... Duchesne has gone, no one knows where. The dull prolonged reports shake the walls and the windows. I find a compact group assembled before the church — the mayor, farmers, and officers; a convoy of fifty wagons that has stopped. I talk with a lieutenant. Last night when they left Ressons-sur-Matz, it was being bombarded. Noyon is taken; the First Division of cavalry holding the *massif* of Boulogne-la-Grasse has been cut to pieces... the brigades falling back from the north are thrown at intervals into the battle. The horsemen have met death heroically, but they cannot hold back the torrent of Boches.

All the inhabitants of Pronleroy are packing up to fly. The butcher closes her house first... her daughters weep and cry out at every cannon shot. People are loading wagons and driving cattle along the road. An old priest passes with his group of fugitives coming from Cressonsacq. He stops and talks of the help of religion in these ‘tragic hours’... then pursues his way toward Trois Étots.

A captain appears, pipe in mouth, decidedly jovial, and explains to me:

‘Yes, the English have fallen back for want of ammunition; if they had only retreated straight backwards, but they obliqued to the left and the connection with our troops was broken.’

‘Then — what is in front of us?’

‘A broken front.’

‘A breach of...?’

‘Something like sixteen kilometres.’

I stand and stare at him. He looks at me from the corner of his eyes.

‘Furthermore, we have to re-form a line of battle in full retreat — that isn’t convenient... but after all there are three army corps on the march.’

I return by the avenue... an English officer overtakes me at a gallop, followed by soldiers very well equipped.

‘Château — speak English — no — disastrous...’

He addresses Duchesne, who has returned. ‘Speak English... no...’ He explains by gestures that he has lost his way and doesn’t speak French.

From all points of the compass British troops are piling in, on foot and on horseback; they rush to Dupérroux’s, eat a little, and go on at top speed.

An English regiment, in perfect order, comes along with a machine gun. They come from Cressonsacq, headed for La Neuville. One of the men jabbars:

‘The enemy is close by, Moyenneville taken...’

The cannon sound louder and louder.

A French regiment in camions arrives at the top of its speed from the direction of Saint-Just. An officer alights, and I ask:

‘Is Moyenneville taken?’

‘Ah, no, *they* are not that near... our guns are all set up. It’s getting pretty hard and it’s going to be worse... you’d do well to open your windows in the château.’

It is said that Fontaine and Thomas have received orders from the prefecture to evacuate their cattle and farm material. The wagons are harnessed... they pile in the bedding and the help, the farming tools, scythes, harrows, etc., and, drawn by horses, take their departure. I go as far as Joséphine’s. She loads her clothes, her mattresses, and starts off in one of the wagons from the Fontaine farm. I

send in search of the rural guard to help me settle my account with Menet, who has been drinking and insulting my people. I have my horse put under lock and key so that the villain won't carry him off. The train from La Neuville no longer runs. We must drive to Saint-Just. When the horse is harnessed, we put in the Menets and their numerous bundles — acquired at my expense... they didn't own a stick when they came here — but it's not the time now for recriminations.

The newspapers arrive; they speak of 'a slight deflection of the front.' Convoys pass. La Neuville being evacuated, its wagons begin to pass. I go down to speak again to the captain. He says: 'So long as the convoy is here, you have nothing to fear. I have orders to send my wagons away in case of bombardment; if things turn out ill, I shall take the people who have remained in the village to the rear.'

'And the camp-kitchens, captain... where shall we put them?' asks a cook who comes up.

A whispered answer: 'Let them remain in the wagon... and the animals in harness — understand?'

Now that is a bad sign... one doesn't speak so in the hearing of civilians.

About five o'clock I talked to a subaltern of better than average intelligence. He thinks that the attack has failed; our regiments are coming up from all directions.

It seems that half of the regiment of Épenoux is out of action; six officers killed out of twenty-seven. About a dozen Boche airmen flew over and swept with machine guns the trenches defended by cavalry fighting on foot. The chief of squadron at Mauduit held the road of Armancourt, closing the great Roye-Montdidier road, until he was almost completely surrounded. After a desperate resistance and complete exhaustion of ammunition, he fell back with the remnant of his fighting groups on Faverolle and Domfront, where he was able to connect some units of infantry.

At six-thirty o'clock two young wagoners came to ask me to receive a great farm outfit of Noyon which is being evacuated — twenty horses, ten cows, thirty persons. I go to hunt up the rural guard to install them. They arrange the wagons in the courtyard; they unharness the horses... two women — ladies, in fact — alight from a small carriage... they ask me to rent them rooms. I show them the apartment that Menet has just left... they take it for their servants and ask for some real rooms for themselves and their children. I open three officers' rooms in the staff wing.

Two men come up the avenue; one of them all in black and rather ceremonious... he asks if he has the honor to address Madame la Marquise.

A woman has joined him... they come from Madame la Vicomtesse de Pontavice's — they are the teacher at Plessier-de-Roye, his wife and his father-in-law... they ask to rent a room; they have brought their bedding and their furniture. I tell them that I will give them quarters as soon as there is any room. We give them one of the pavilions at the gate. They have abandoned four goats given them by Madame Pontavice, and this is the second time they have fled from the enemy.

Two more women arrive, one of whom is very old and can hardly walk; her husband, the beadle of Saint-Antoine, who is ill, has been taken into a carriage, and she waits for him on the road; they have come from Compiègne on foot — twenty-two kilometres. All night the airships bombarded them; they dared not leave their cellars!

The camions have started for Estrées to take infantry brought by trains, to pour them out on the firing line. The rolling kitchens still stand waiting.

7 o'clock

The farm outfit from Noyon is all arranged... there are eight children from three to twelve who play and dance and

laugh in the courtyard. The women are in traveling-jackets, very smart, with pretty yellow boots, but without hats. The old lady in black — and she is a lady through and through — orders the movements of the wagon and the arrangements of the rooms and the watering of the horses like a general.

Thursday, March 28

A reasonably calm night, overcast and cold with no attack by airplanes.

I meet farmers' wives breakfasting in the kitchen... they talk of my field of oats to be sown... if they make a halt here they will find work for the horses and will work themselves for me.

I go out into the village... still another convoy... it has gone off to the south instead of returning as the captain had announced yesterday... the kitchens have gone during the night.

Duchesne grumbles, 'But who will take us under his wing if the Boches arrive?'

Aristide, who was to take up his work to-day, decamped last night; Marcel went away last evening with his mother. Convoys and motors pass... I stop a driver who is reading a newspaper. Of course, the mails have stopped, with no postman.

'The news? They say in these papers that all goes well... you can't make anything of it... we are holding them.'

I ask an explanation of the position from an officer.

'Not too cheerful. We have been turned back... a part of our front is broken... the two wings of the Germans are closing in on us; above us there is no fighting — it is "No-Man's Land."'

It is extremely cold... there is a wind like an insane tempest.

'Excellent for us,' said the officer. 'Our gas, the new kind, will get busy at last.'

Almost no sound of guns... the officers yesterday said that, as long as one heard the reports, that proved the struggle was still going on.

A captain who was getting into an automobile said to me: 'It's the wind that prevents us from hearing... they have fallen back, but are still firing... the First Division of cavalry stands to the last man despite the heavy losses.'

They are going to relieve the Twenty-Second Division of infantry, which has been very hard pushed. General de Rascas occupies Mortemer. I judge it *à propos* to put my papers in order; to make my will again; and to fill my valises with valuable articles and clothing.

Going down to the village, I meet the second load of fugitives... going up again to the château, I meet the wagons from the farm at Noyon just going... the ladies absolutely insist upon paying for their rooms. I refuse. Thereupon each one of them rises from the wagon she rides upon and bows to me as she rides past... they are going farther south. Duchesne — who has the temperament of a thief — went out on the roads to drive in the cattle that had escaped from their herds, or were lost in the fields. He returns driving before him cows, calves, and sheep, which he shuts up in my stables.

Every hour I go down to Madame Dupéroux's to learn the news which the officers passing through have given her. I write letters to my daughters to tell them I am running no risks... an officer undertakes to send on my mail. I go to see the beasts that Duchesne has captured and to make a declaration of the capture to the mayor.

An officer says to me: 'Has any one thought of taking away the consecrated wafers from the church? You ought, madame, to look to it, and make the first priest who goes by take them. It must not be that *they* can profane them!'

I go in search of the keys of the church to Mademoiselle Alexandrine. We are both much embarrassed by what we

have to do... we watch for the hospital wagon, but it does not pass. At last we see the curé of La Neuville, all covered with mud. I go with him to the church and lock the doors, the keys of which he begs me to keep.

'In the confusion of yesterday I drank the Holy Wine after eating. What a Holy Week! No officer here yesterday, none to-day... and panicky rumors... Rollot taken, only eleven kilometres from here, and Boches advancing twelve and fifteen kilometres a day.'

I meet soldiers... there is one counter-attack which seems to be succeeding... several army corps have come up. The Sixth is in position... some English troops, having re-formed their lines, pass through Trois Étons with the most placid courage marching to meet the guns. The British artillery is setting up its batteries at Méry.

Some fugitives from Pronleroy have returned to their homes. They call upon me to shelter them in the cellars of the château in case of bombardment. They say that the Germans are fifteen kilometres above us. They have retaken Montdidier, Lassigny, a part of Noyon, in which fighting is still going on; they are working out a movement for Amiens — to cut the English army off from its bases.

We see from the crest of the Fief the lights of the batteries which are firing in our defense. The weather has cleared... our artillery is more and more active.

The mayor sends a wagon to La Neuville to look for bread, as no one here now supplies us with any. There is, on the road to Cressonsacq, near the gate to the park, the corpse of an old man who died from the hardships of this exodus. M. Tonnelier is looking after having him buried. I saw again the refugees from Conchy-les-Pots, whom I had taken in on the 16th. Gilbert tells me that they are passing weary days and are going on to a safer place.

People are constantly bringing to the château wandering beasts without owners.

Deathlike aspect of the village... there are no more than thirty people left there; dogs prowl about, bands of chickens and geese walk in and out of the abandoned houses. The passing refugees install themselves in the deserted rooms and ravage and carry away whatever pleases them. Last night camions, which had received orders to drive a regiment of infantry to the firing line in the direction of Thiaucourt, were stopped by a man who jumped out of a ditch, holding out his arm to bar their passage.

'Take yourself out of there, my boy!' cries one of the drivers.

'I'm the rural guard.'

'I don't give a damn who you are!'

'Well, you'd better!... Do you know where you are going that way? Straight to the Boches.'

'The other ragtags got through all right.'

'Half-turn, I tell you! There is a patrol which has taken your *poilus* prisoners as fast as they came out of the camions.'

Whistles, a signal, noisy reports... they hoist up the rural guard and take a half-turn... for Rollot... the firing line... that is easy to say... if there is such a thing as a firing line in this mix-up, where everything is at sixes and sevens.

This evening the artillery duel is so intense that at the moment I was going to bed, I went down again into the village to see if the battle was upon us.

A non-com. eating at Dupéroux's says to me: 'You can sleep in peace — to speak figuratively. The guns have not changed their position. The night hasn't come yet when your part of the country will be evacuated.'

Good Friday, March 29

When I wake up, I go to pass an hour at Madame Dupéroux's... they know nothing... they have seen nobody... there have been no convoys... the road is deserted.

A day of suspense, of mortal anxiety.

An artillery officer passes in a motor at full speed in the afternoon, then an English convoy of great guns camouflaged upon motor supports.

Passage of a French convoy, which stops and gives us news.

Always the same thing; behind Lassigny the line is holding... the First Division of cavalry has fallen back to Lataule... fighting hand-to-hand.

The chief of a supply convoy stops for provisions at Madame Dupérourx's and asks to buy no matter what, but especially beans and preserves. We send to get all my stock of beans from the château.

Saturday, March 30

It rains... the mayor sends for me... the news is better. We are holding all along the line... the first violence of the attack is checked. The First Hussars detrain to-night at Estrées, and will arrive during the night... fifty officers and four hundred horses to put up. We shall put up as many as we can at the château.

I help Juliette do the rooms... we make supplementary sleeping-places by doubling up the beds... we place mattresses on the floor. I shall have sixteen places to give them.

We eat hurriedly at eight. There are still so many things to do — lay the fires, put a tray in the billiard-room, for warm drinks to give to the officers coming in out of the cold rain. Some one calls me... it is ten o'clock and the mayor comes with an officer who introduces himself as Captain de la Rochette — a red-faced, very fashionable person, despite the mud which covers his boots and his cloak. I go up to the bedrooms with the linen... the non-com. has lost his piece of chalk. M. de la Rochette is irritated... then I, myself, go and write the names over the doors.

Each squadron as it arrives marches by under the lindens.

Captain de la Rochette tells me they are too tired to have a cup of tea... they want only a bed... they are quite done up with fatigue.

The cannon thunders tremendously, but we haven't the time to listen to it... we know that the French cavalry is here, and in case of danger the women and children shall find succor.

Midnight

I go into the attic to watch the flashes... the line of fire surrounds us in a half-circle and at moments is as bright as broad daylight.

'Those are our guns that are firing just now,' says the captain, whom I meet in the hall. 'But what an Easter Eve!'

'There must be a chaplain in the regiment.'

'Yes, we shall have Masses. To-morrow morning I will send you a memorandum of the hours.'

Easter Sunday, March 31

I hurry to get ready. The captain introduces the chaplain to me... we start for the church. I take the priest to Made-moiselle Alexandrine, who entertains him while awaiting the hour of Mass. Then I go to announce the Easter service in the few occupied houses in Pronleroy.

At four-thirty the colonel comes down and presents to me the officers, the Commandant de Longeaux, Captain de Saint-Seine, Captain de Chefdebien, husband of a lady related to the Foucaults. He looks at my books as a con-noisseur... we have a chat which soon becomes genealogical. The officers go into ecstasies over the luxury of lump sugar and silver sugar-tongs and piles of little tea cakes... one of the lieutenants helps me pour. Lively conversation about Anjou... the colonel belonged to the Twenty-Fifth Dra-goons.

I leave the officers at bridge and billiards. At six-thirty I go to Vespers... the colonel is already in his pew.

On returning, I hastily put on a black silk dress, very simple, and go to look after the fires... the stove in the great dining-room is burning well. I light the table in the middle and at the ends with a great lamp.

Menu of the dinner: Pheasant soup, rabbit sauté chasseur, fried potatoes, preserves and figs. The supplies have been short since the beginning of the battle.

As soon as you have any cavalry with you, however tragic the circumstances, you find yourself in a worldly *milieu*. I am placed in the center of the table opposite the colonel. My neighbors joke, everybody is light-hearted. We talk — an inexhaustible subject — about women visiting the armies.

This morning a motor going ninety kilos an hour came near turning over at the corner by the church; covered with mud by the splashing, two officers, spying the general's insignia, saluted, and were surprised to see a civilian... it was M. Poincaré visiting the front.

We go after dinner to the northern window of the attic to watch the gleam of the line of fire... the cannon are blazing away merrily. I ask, 'Is it from those coming or those going?'

'It is both; according to the latest news the railway station at Moyenneville has been seriously bombarded, and there is much damage.'

Monday, April 1

Mass with communion at eight-thirty... a goodly number of soldiers, the colonel, the commandant, and I made our Easter confessions. On my return I watched a convoy of the Twenty-Seventh Dragoons pass along the road; it is the horses who are rejoining... the men, brought up by camion, have been in the line for several days, Chefdebien

and Saint-Seine explain to me. I had no sooner returned to my room than a soldier knocks at my door:

'There is a general asking to see madame.'

I prepare to greet the general of division in command at La Neuville.

A very cheerful voice cries: 'Bonjour, Geneviève.'

It is Rascas, booted and spurred, helmet on head... he is talking at the foot of the staircase with Colonel Leps.

'I have just come from the front. It was my brigade that was in it all the time; it was a hot time, but we are holding them; nothing to fear on your part. I am going to Saint-Just at any moment; you did not go away, and you were mighty well right. Stay at home whatever they tell you... use my name so far as it can be useful to you. You have no idea of the pillaging of abandoned châteaux... write to my wife that you have seen me... my letters don't get to her and I haven't much time to write... tell her everything is going well.'

He refused everything I offered him, even a stirrup cup. I accompanied him to the corner of the church, and he said: 'Our three days' battle around Rollot were tough, but we had the satisfaction of seeing our front hold without being broken through and of handing the line over to a fresh infantry division... we were engaged for nine days without stopping. We covered eighty kilometres, disputing every inch, engaged upon different fronts for the help of various armies. I am temporarily at Moyenneville waiting to go to the rear for a rest.'¹

The horses, held by an orderly, follow us. The general goes on: 'You have some very nice people at your house.

¹ The first Division of Cavalry was engaged in battle one hundred days; was in trenches six hundred and fifty days; traveled sixty-five hundred kilometres; changed headquarters two hundred and forty times. Out of an effective force of fifty-five hundred men it lost twenty-two hundred and seventy-two, of whom seven hundred were killed or missing, fifteen hundred wounded, and eighteen taken prisoner.

I passed through Compiègne yesterday; there is much less damage than people had told me.'

At the crossing of the roads, Roger de Rascas leaps into his saddle and disappears very quickly as always.

Tuesday, April 2

The owners of the stray cattle have been found... they have come with the mayor to get their animals and to sign papers. A little mischievous bull escapes and I see his owner running after him... Duchesne and soldiers lounging about... the sentry at the gate puts his bayonet across... the bull goes into the park again... the orderlies join in... there is a most amusing race for the military element, shouts and vociferations. The maddened beast leaps through a breach in the wall, and now he is in the village... children fly in terror, a flock of soldiers, more and more amused by this performance, block the avenue, cross their weapons and wave their arms wildly under the direction of Duchesne, who assumes an air of importance and directs the movements. They crowd the beast into the corridor of a house, the animal's owner gets him out, bound fast, and takes all the pursuers to drink at Dupérour's.

Wednesday, April 3

A few loud cannon shots during the night. At five o'clock the roaring of an airplane and bursting of bombs. I go to the attic, but can see nothing in the twilight.

I ask a soldier, who is doing some washing in a stewpan at the desk on the ground floor: 'Is that a Boche squadron? Have you seen anything?'

'That's nothing, madame; go back to bed and sleep in peace.'

'It's easy to say... how is one to rest with all this racket which makes the walls tremble and the glasses clink?'

A squadron of forty of our airships has cruised during

the day above our immense convoys... they fly very high, lying in wait for any German planes that might risk coming down on us. At dinner I find all the officers in the courtyard with their heads in the air. They see thick smoke in the direction of Montdidier — fire without doubt. One of them has followed with his glass the descent in flames of one of our sausages... he thinks the pilot was able to save himself by a parachute.

The colonel has been driving in the country, and found lying in the grass a company of Moroccan Tirailleurs, and in a field a superb battalion of partridges which flew away with a great flapping of wings. Then a ball whizzed by him... was it meant for him or for the partridges?

Thursday, April 4

A beautiful spring day. I get a man and a horse to plough the field for potatoes. Duchesne, who ought to do the ploughing, wishes to loaf all day, sends away the horse and man on his own account. Intervention of Captain de la Rochette... he must needs begin the work under his own eyes and sends a non-com. to oversee it.

Saturday, April 6

Cannonading more and more violent... we hear the *dz dz* of the shells which whistle as they go over. I pile into the valises all articles of value; I have the cellar door opened, carry in an armchair, some furniture covers, and chairs.

I go out into the village and catch sight of the Territorials rolling the road — a sign that our zone is getting nearer the line of battle.

‘Don’t get excited, my little lady... that is our artillery that is firing — those big booms are all going, not coming.’

I go to the mayor. He furnishes quarters to the aviator who overlooks the Fief and telephones to the posts in the trenches.

‘The advance of the Boche has gone fifteen metres farther and has cost them thirty thousand men. We consider it a victory for us, but to-day we know nothing.’

At six o'clock M. Tonnelier comes to tell me the aviator has assured him that the firing this morning was a barrage fire against an attack of German infantry whom we have mown down — that there is nothing to fear for the moment.

Billets at the château for the Eighty-Eighth Infantry. I have a wagon harnessed in order to go and get bread and thence push on to Lieuvillers to get some money from my notary. Met a line of motor guns, enormous new pieces starting for the front with little bouquets in their bronze maws and their names printed in great letters: ‘Ouragan’ — ‘La Râleuse’ — ‘Georgette.’ The camions which accompany them bear the distinctive sign which we see upon the guns themselves, what used to be called ‘*armes parlantes*’ — a Boche crushed under a smoking kettle... three shells served on a platter by a little pastry-cook.

Met more batteries of light artillery pulled by five horses at a gallop; then comes a camion which has lost its way... it was going to Angivilliers. I get down into the ditch to get out of the way of the heavy vehicle, breaking a trace in doing so. The driver of the camion amiably gets down and fixes up my trace with a piece of cord, and puts up the top of my carriage, for it rains. On my return from Lieuvillers, I find him blocking the road with a camion which he hasn't succeeded in turning, and I have to go through the field.

The priest whom the Bishop has named incumbent of Pronleroy has arrived. He sends to ask me what hour he may come to the château. He, it appears, has seen tanks in Pronleroy. We shall not see them, for they travel only at night. The officers of the Eighty-Eighth, who are leaving, assure me that it was not Montiers that was bombarded yesterday, but Montigny, which is nearer Saint-Just than to us.

At one-thirty, Juliette gives me notice that Abbé Vignette is here... he is a poor old priest having little experience... seems kindly and very emotional. He and his sister have fled from the bombardment of Conchy-les-Pots... he left his purse on his table and the camions have carried away all his luggage — God knows where! The evacuation camion deposited them in Estrées-Saint-Denis which was being bombarded by airplanes... they passed the night piled up against a straw mill and went on foot to Beauvais at dawn, he without a sou to his name. It was he who gave absolutions all along the road on the tragic day of March 27th. I put myself at his disposal to supply what he lacks at the rectory. He asks for sheets, blankets, a small cooking-stove, and dishes. I ask him to say three Masses for my dead parents, which permits me to give him some money without offense. I take his name and that of his sister, to give them to the societies for the aid of impoverished refugees. I start for La Neuville, to get bread for myself, Madame Dupérourx, and M. le Curé... an adventurous trip... motors are passing me all the time. At the cross-roads between the two high banks of the road, a convoy is bottled up by a camion drawn across the road with ditched wheels, and two soldiers are busily trying to take them off.

'We must see if we can't let the lady and carriage pass!' cried a trooper.

'Where'll she pass to... up the bank... we're stuck here for a good half-hour!'

The soldiers bustle around the ditched wheels... people in carts, also come for bread, and whose horses are restless, swear and curse behind me. On the horizon is a non-com. on horseback riding ahead of a convoy of forage carts. The non-com. prances about the slope and comes to me to talk.

They are going beyond Saint-Just toward Montigny... they have been *en route* three days already... the horses will have done two hundred and forty kilometres without

being unharnessed, and they seem none the worse for it.

The horsemen swear freely at the 'damned son-of-a-gun with its busted wheel,' and finally the camion wiggles to and fro, gets up, tips to one side, and our civil and army truck moves on for La Neuville, where another convoy of camions bars our way.

The sentry shouts to us at last, 'The road is clear... turn to the right!'

'But I am going to the left, to the baker's.'

'To the right — that's the order!'

I start my horse and pass at a trot. Belloy is waiting for me... the sentry rushes after me, and shouts:

'You are not allowed to stand still... not allowed to go in the direction of Montiers.'

I let him shout, and drive on as quickly as I can.

At eight o'clock begins a terrible cannonading... gleams in the sky, and the thunder of explosions. I go down into the village to get the news. At Madame Dupérour's a rather nice-looking non-com. is buying a cake of *savon de luxe*.

I ask: 'What is that cannonading?'

'That's nothing. That's just fooling in the line.'

'We shan't be cannonaded to-night... we can sleep?'

'On both ears. That's the heavy piece of the Boches bombarding Estrées. When it's a heavy one, then it does make a noise. It's the batteries at Lassigny that are firing now.'

April 10

M. Tonnelier sends word to me that there was a savage attack yesterday on Plémont and Plessier de Roye. Our artillery broke up the attack.

I go with Juliette with a load of linen, and to carry eggs, potatoes, and beans to the curé.

April 11

The English are falling back upon La Bassée-Armen-

tières. I take Mademoiselle Vignette in my carriage to purchase some needed articles at La Neuville. When we reach the corner, an officer seated beside the sentry takes my horse by the reins, leads it up on the sidewalk, and authorizes me to go that way to the baker's. We see observation balloons on the watch, far off on the horizon... signals appear, and there is firing by Boche airplanes which are prowling about. Soldiers explain to us that there are heavy guns stationed at Saint-Martin-au-Bois, six kilometres from Pronleroy, five kilometres from the Boche trenches. They are the ones that are firing.

On returning, I leave some bread at Madame Dupérour's. A soldier wants to buy some, but I assure him I am not the baker.

April 12

At Madame Dupérour's they say that at Rollot we have gained a kilometre from the Boches. Madame Tonnelier has seen M. Desmazes flying madly in his carriage, saying that Saint-Just is in flames. Great activity among the aviators.

The people of the Oise are returning to their communes... a prefectorial decree provides that those who do not return will be regarded as *émigrés* and exiled to Guignan, in Brittany.

Sunday, April 14

Return of Marcel. Duchesne dismissed on his refusal to work.

Quartering of the Thirtieth Artillery. It seems that it was here last year.

Duchesne refuses to work and he also refuses to go. He claims he was hired for a year.

I go to see an advocate who is a friend of my notary at Lieuvillers to take, with the Society for War Aid, which sent him to me, the necessary measures for getting rid of

Duchesne. I hope to send some letters... no mails at Lieuvillers... the daughter of the postmistress tells me that the post is suspended in that district because the railroad is cut by the bombardment at Saint-Just... several houses have been leveled; the city hall is burned. They are going to organize a postal service by motor.

The cooks of the artillery have told Juliette the English have fallen back fifteen kilometres on the north and Béthune has been taken.

Heavy cannonading in the night, but, as no shells arrive near us, I pay no attention to it.

Tuesday, April 16

A regiment is settling in. Five men for the cooking, unkempt and dirty; they are constantly overturning pots of grease on the stove, making a horrible smoke and unbearable stench in the château. I pass my time opening windows.

April 17

The colonel sends me his *Écho de Paris* every day. I hear the tac-tac of the typewriters in the office. Many officers come and go; they bow to me, but are not introduced.

I have the potatoes planted in the ground prepared for them. I am promised a horse and a man to help me cultivate my fields. Going to fetch the seed potatoes from the servants' quarters, I see smoke coming from the roof in one of the barns. I run to notify the non-com. on duty and we go to the attic... soldiers have placed a stove in a hole in the wall... the laths are beginning to glow. We had to put out the incipient fire with buckets of water.

It took hours to get the horse and man at work. My two whiffle-trees have been taken away by the troops. Captain de la Rochette had lent me a horse along with harness... the whiffle-trees of the artillery are fastened to their wagons... we have to look for some in the village. Marcel and the soldiers start... it is two o'clock when they

begin and they have leave for the cinema at four o'clock... the plough doesn't budge... the soldiers do not know how to use the Brabant ploughs of the North. At last we hitch up the weeder, and the field is put in condition... the soldiers look thoughtfully at our goings and comings, rather contemptuous, while seeking snails in the park and dandelions in the fields.

One of the mares of the officers, picketed in the grass, gets her head caught in the wireless apparatus installed behind the barns, and we run to untangle her.

'Look out!' cries a witty soldier, 'or she'll swallow the *communiqué*.'

Two soldiers walk in front of me.

'The more they fall back, the better it goes; the nearer we'll get to victory!'

'Good old keep-up-the-morale stuff...'

'Yes, the horizon-blue waltz that puts joy in our hearts... and other foolery.'

'Are you going to the cinema?'

'No; I am in the second performance.'

'And in five days, Duckie, we'll have another programme.'

Have been on the way to La Neuville in a carriage, to no purpose... there's no bread to-day for civilians; we shall have some to-morrow.

In the evening from eight to ten there is a very violent artillery battle.

April 18

I go to La Neuville for bread... find travel difficult... meet great camions, hospital wagons... all the commotion of sudden departures.

I can obtain only two five-pound loaves. I give forty sous to my laborer of yesterday, who is broken-hearted not to keep on with his work.

The officers breakfast at eight o'clock, awaiting orders.

I verify the number of blankets in the bedrooms, some of which disappear with every regiment. I watch from the hall windows the last wagons depart in the fine rain, gray and melancholy weather. It is the second day that the postman has missed. I talk with the captain who is waiting in the hall... it is he who paved the avenue yesterday, and I compliment him on his work.

'We ruin so much that we must do some repairing.'

We talk. 'Where are you going?'

'Probably to Estrées to be near a point of departure. We march directly southeast... the next stage will tell us more.'

'You are going north to support the English, who are falling back; the *Écho* says that Hazebrouck and Ypres are threatened.'

'That wouldn't be the first time that we have patched up the line!'

I resume my subject: 'But when you reached Candor on the 22d of March, what did you find there? Where did you come from?'

'We were near Reims... they piled us into camions and we traveled twelve hours, landed between Candor and Lassigny; caught in the retreat, our flanks were turned and we were all but surrounded twice; we thought we were prisoners, but nothing was connected in that wavering advance... here British units, separated, there Boches filtering in... no trenches... not a point prepared which we could fall back on or hold. We slackened up the rush as much as we could, connected the scattered units until we reached our former lines, where we were able to stick.'

'That artillery duel last night... was that not a sign of falling back?'

'Since the 20th of March we have covered a good deal of ground; there are strong batteries now... *they* shall not pass, but there is the bombardment... you are fifteen kilometres from the enemy.'

April 25

Went for bread to La Neuville... missed the first baking and had to wait an hour. Bought a newspaper and learned of the attack at Amiens, the loss of Hangard and Villers Bretonneux.

Women chatter at the door of the bakery, waiting as I am; several returned yesterday from their flight; at Montiers the shells were raining down aimed at the village — no victims.

The pharmacy has reopened; Madame Ranson is arranging linen. She tells me that the reason she went away was because a captain told her there was no more time to lose; she and her daughter made sixty-five kilometres on foot to relatives at Auteuil. There were so many fugitives on the road they could find neither resting-place nor bread.

The Nazarres, who have been gone two days, have returned... they were under fire of the Boches, and the shells fell in the kitchen garden; yesterday one fell in the courtyard on a party of men; four were killed and seven wounded. They won't go down into the cellars for protection; they prefer to be shot in their beds.

May 14

The attack has passed, but we are still under the cannon of the enemy lines.

Our zone — the advanced zone — makes all movement either way impossible. Civilians have to be very small and keep out of the way. To change one's position one must have a reason which is worth while.

May 17

A night as light as day. A brilliant searchlight casts its enchanted beam upon everything. There will be a raid very soon.

Explosions which draw nearer — sharp, formidable crashes; bombs have fallen not far away.

Two hours of sleep and a new *escadrille*, which passes quickly. A third *escadrille*, which goes more slowly, always with the tearing sound of the explosions. I have closed my book. I am trying to sleep. Some one taps at my door. I think some one is ill, and I ask, in distress, 'What is it?'

'Troops asking for quarters.'

'At this hour! This is getting to be a habit.'

Yesterday La Neuville was full of soldiers. I rush into my dressing-gown and slippers... nobody but myself to arrange for the billeting.

I find in the corridor a non-com., very courteous, who apologizes for arriving at a lady's house at one o'clock in the morning. The soldiers carry an electric lamp... happily the Boche planes have ceased to prowl over our heads. I take the soldiers through the château, the attic, the stables, and the servants' quarters, and enumerate my reserves.

'Oh, we are very decent people,' the non-com. assures me.

'Where have you come from?'

'From Estrées.'

'And the raid?'

'Ah, we were saluted all along the road, and when arriving here at the church... they didn't have to fall very far.'

May 18

In the morning preparation for the officers of the rooms not yet occupied. Met in the corridor a small, very smart officer in black artillery uniform; he apologizes much for the disturbance which his arrival at night caused. Made a tour of the servants' quarters... not many men and not many horses... one of the batteries only is quartered with me... there have been counter-orders. A part of the 177th, intended for La Neuville, has come here; the orderly who arranged the lodgings here to-night was sent farther on.

Nobody knows any longer who is coming or going... one

doesn't understand. What is certain is that one battery — nobody knows which one — will arrive at midnight.

At two o'clock no battery has appeared. I start for Bailleul to straighten out passes with the bureaux.

My daughters have a grandmother who is dying at Orléans. I may be called upon to leave at any moment.

Joséphine, who acts as my coachman, has details about last night's raid: eight bombs on La Neuville... all the cows belonging to Belloy the baker were mistaken for picketed horses and shot; they were found this morning, dead in the meadow. Montiers was sprinkled; the house of the commanding general of the Thirty-Fifth Corps escaped by ten yards. Units quartered at Éraïne are practicing at throwing grenades, which is very noisy. One sees a black line in a field... it is a group of officers who are watching the work... they are digging a trench between Éraïne and Éreuse... they plant stakes for barbed wire; there are bits of it along the edge of the road.

There were several carriages harnessed in front of the mayor's office, filled with people awaiting their papers. Joséphine finds old acquaintances. Bombs have fallen all over the country and there is general consternation.

On our return, barbed wire is spread on both sides of the road. As soon as we get to the road from Estrées, we pass platoons of cavalrymen, then camions, automobiles, and cyclists blocking the road. We have to stop; my horse is impatient and kicks.

On our arrival at Pronleroy, another mix-up: my courtyard is so filled with horses, carriages, guns, and soldiers that it is hard to believe that I can get in. There is great difficulty in finding Aristide to unharness.

Sunday, May 19

One of our most exciting mornings... Mass, the arrangement of the salons, preparation of tarts and cakes. While I

had my hands in the piecrust, they sent word that the curé wanted to talk to me before Vespers about a pilgrimage.

According to the conversation of the officers the rain of bombs on the district presages an imminent attack.

As soon as the tarts were ready and the table set, I went off to the rectory, and met four officers in the avenue.

Lieutenant de Champeaux took the part of spokesman. 'Madame, is there a tennis-court or a croquet ground which will enable us to pass the day?'

'There is no tennis-court, but a croquet ground somewhere. I will look for it when Vespers are over. I'm going to open the billiard-room; you will find books and cards there.'

'Oh, fine! We're going to be altogether "château."'

'Invite as many friends as you wish.'

M. le Curé is planning a neuvaine to the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, that Pronleroy may be preserved from bombs and invasion; he wishes to invite the whole population to go on Wednesday morning in procession to the little miraculous chapel at Cernoy. He will announce the day and hour at Vespers.

I return to attend to the baking of a cake. I have not seen the captain, and that embarrasses me, for I shall have to ask a cyclist to carry my letters to the post.

It seems that at Moyenneville, an ambulance *dépôt* which neglected to dim its lamps served as a target for airplanes... the staff and the wounded took fright and fled in their shirts to the fields. The white shirts served as a mark for the machine guns of the airplanes, which were flying very low. Fifteen were killed or wounded.

At Lieuvillers, bombs fell on the last houses... the lights had been covered on the street side, but not at the back.

I return in haste to fill my tarts with preserved peaches, and to arrange a nice tray of small cakes, sherry, Marsala, currant wine, and pitchers of cold water for the thirsty. We

take cakes and tables into the billiard-room... a numerous attendance... a group of officers stand in the courtyard. I ask them to come in. I distribute pieces of tart without thought of rank, then pour out the currant wine and am preparing to put water in it when M. de Champeaux empties his glass. 'That's too good — neat. We can drink the water afterwards.' They drank and ate cakes and were as pleased as children when I offered the sherry.

'But this is more than a tea; it's a feast!'

I propose to go in search of the croquet set. M. de Champeaux and a comrade come to carry it. We disentangle it from the other games.

'Let's take the skittles, too; that will keep more people busy.'

We plant the hoops of the croquet set along the front of the château in the shadow... the game is started... the courtyard is sacred to the passage of postman and orderlies.

New arrivals. I take them in to tea in groups of three or four; I have to look for glasses and a box of cake. They lavish upon me the expression, 'We are not in the habit of being treated this way.'

'But it is my duty.'

'Yes, but there are so many empty châteaux.'

Several of the gentlemen are very much at ease and overjoyed to find some social relaxation. There was also the plebeian officer, a little awkward, but enormously flattered to be treated as an equal by Madame la Marquise.

As we walked through the salons, we fell into conversation very readily. The surgeon-major arrives from La Neuville. He wants no tea. He has seen the captain, whose health disturbs him — forty degrees of fever; furthermore, the state of the men in the batteries is not good. The journey from the Argonne to Picardy, piled in wagons in the extreme heat, was murderous for men already fatigued and depressed.

My spell as a hostess is ended. I go in haste to put my letters in the post at La Neuville before dinner. I meet some too attentive soldiers who propose to carry my umbrella. After the meal, I talk to a group of officers on the terrace in the park. It was a clear night. We defy the airships and make a tour to see that there are no lights. Telephones have been installed everywhere and lines cross each other all over the park.

Toward midnight the third raid, the only long one. The *escadrille* cruised an hour above our heads, violently cannonaded by our batteries.

May 20

Start off in the carriage in search of bread. On my return I meet Thérèse and Marie-Louise Mallard. I enlist them for the pilgrimage.

'Many people are counting upon going,' they tell me. In the courtyard we meet the officers. The regiment has been notified and may start at any moment. What are we to do with the sick captain? It will be necessary to take him in an ambulance, and how will he endure the journey?

'But you must leave him with me. I am a very good nurse.'

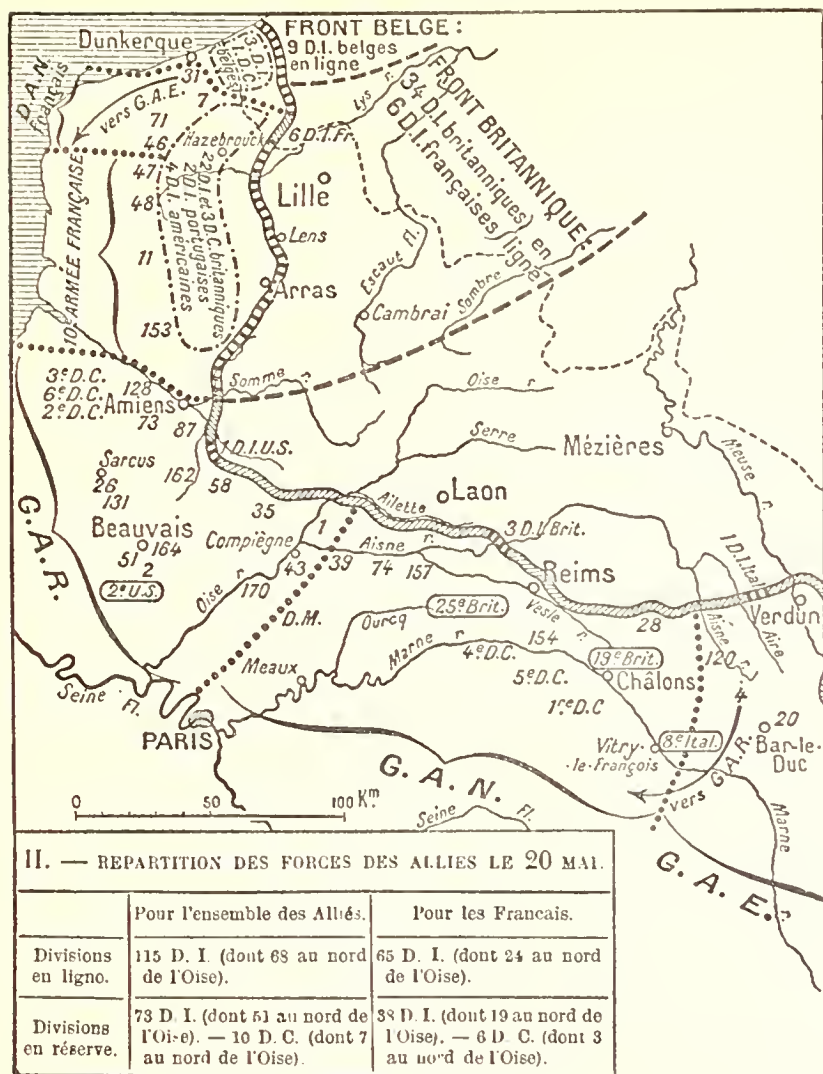
'He is much disturbed about what is going to happen to him.'

'I will go and reassure him.' I knock at his door... a weak voice replies: 'Come in... What, it is you, madame!' says the tall fellow, much confused; he was so pale and he looks to me so ill; he can't even raise his head; it makes one's heart ache.

I question him. He suffers especially in his head, and he has a cough besides.

'Oh, madame, how earnestly I ask your pardon for falling sick in your house, it is such a nuisance for you...'

'You mustn't think of that; if I couldn't be of service



here, I should be in an ambulance... what I want is to *serve*. Consider yourself in the château as if you were with an aunt who wanted to care for you and give you all you need.'

In the trembling voice of a small boy, he replies:

'Oh, how good it is, madame, to be comfortably in bed

... it is so long a time since any one troubled about me... since a woman's hand fixed my pillow... not since my last wound.'

I close the blinds; the sun, which is coming in in waves, makes the room stifling.

I drove to the rectory to arrange with the curé the hours for confession. On returning, I meet officers wandering through the park; they have nothing to do; they are waiting for orders to depart. I take them to the billiard-room, where they will be at home. I take a few moments for breakfast and return to the captain.

'How are you?'

'Better; a comrade brought me a bottle of champagne, and that set me up.'

A troop of young officers, M. de Champeaux at the head, play croquet in the overwhelming heat; they are drenched with sweat and are thirsty. Through the window of the dining-room, where I have arranged glasses and plates, I suggest that they have something to drink... an improvised snack: a box of biscuits, fresh cold water with currant and raspberry syrup. I call the billiard-players; they are too shy to accept. The bridge-table has disappeared... I inquire about it and find that the bridge-players have gone into the small salon in order to have silence. They are thirsty, and they bring their comrades at billiards into the dining-room.

I go in the evening to the captain to open the windows, to air the chamber; he has slept and is better. The surgeon authorizes vegetable soup and lettuce. Juliette will take him a light meal. I go to the kitchen to confer about his dinner when they inform me that M. de Lauzon is waiting in the great hall. I had to decline to see him yesterday... he thought that I did it on purpose. On going downstairs I find a small officer so timid that he stutters with emotion. In speaking to him of the Anjou Lauzons, I calm him down... it is a distant branch of his family and we find

ourselves with the Paumelières, his kinsmen and my former neighbors, on a plane of smooth conversation. I bring him some syrup to drink. He looks at the portraits with interest. He is concerned with genealogy and is familiar with the origin of the Foucaults and their dates. The Guy-Foulques were reigning dukes of Guyenne in 850. I invite him to join the groups of croquet-players.

Goings to and fro of orderlies and mailmen, who apologize for crossing the great hall to speak to their officers on the croquet ground.

Music. In the salon, Lieutenant Saporta, a good violinist, plays '*La Dernière Pensée*' and '*Le Clair de Lune*,' while a comrade plays a half-audible accompaniment on the Érard piano.

The non-coms. over the kitchen pluck their half-muted guitars; buzzing of pizzicati which furnish for the pathetic song of the violin a piquant accompaniment in the manner of the serenade in *Don Juan*, of which Musset says that it 'mocks the melody in going so sadly.'

At the desks of the telephonists a soldier with a superb voice roars '*Manon, voici le soleil*,' while a German airplane, pursued by bursting shrapnel, hovers around to take photographs of the guns' marksmanship. Here is that mixture of danger, of good cheer, of overflowing youth, happy to live, which one does not know at the rear.

During the night a short raid, or rather passage of a squadron flying toward Paris.

May 21

Rest in morning. I go to my sick man. A clearer 'Come in,' and I find the captain standing, still a little wobbly.

'You see, madame, your having thought about me was enough to set me up again.'

'But it is foolish for you to get up.'

'I must go out. I have a battery that starts this evening, and I must arrange about its departure.'

‘You must take a little Spanish wine, then, and a biscuit before you go.’

‘Oh, madame, that is too much trouble.’

I bring the tray and we talk.

‘I must make a reconnaissance on the Trois Étots road to see if it is passable, and if I can take my car through to-morrow to take some wounded on a journey which they can’t do on foot.’

When I go out, I meet some soldiers walking. The umbrella I carry to keep off the sun seems to amuse them a good deal... an instrument which they have not seen for a long time excites their wit and they picturesquely exclaim, ‘Would you like us to carry it for you, mademoiselle?’

That ‘mademoiselle’ flatters me a good deal.

I meet also a liaison officer... he has left his bicycle in a ditch and is picking violets. The Territorials are rebuilding a road alongside the sunken road... a carriage might pass.

The captain joins me, seemingly quite well; the size of the dining-room surprises him. ‘Do you eat here all alone, madame?’

‘No, I have a small dining-room where I will take you. We’re a little late. Your cream was soured, and I had to prepare another jar and carry it to the cellar to cool in the water, which takes time.’

They have spread a white cloth and set an easy-chair with cushions for the invalid... they bring in boiled eggs and toast which he nibbles at; he swallows with difficulty, forcing himself to do it. My asparagus tempts him... he eats three stalks. His chocolate disappears, with much talk between each mouthful. I leave him stretched out on the divan to have a nap before his comrades arrive.

At four o’clock the gathering was quite large. I bring some Marsala and biscuits for the captain... a lieutenant goes to fetch him from his room. He is better, and eats his

biscuit with pleasure. I offer the others drink, and they thank me; they have sent for beer from Dupéroux's.

We talk in the great hall... there is an epidemic of grippe in the regiment. I speak of the misfortune of the 360th, whose first battalion has been taken prisoner with its camions.

'Yes, the English staff, when it restored the sector, gave false information, or information that became false on our arrival. In short, nothing was as our command had thought from a distance.'

I tell the captain that because of the Vespers for the month of Mary at eight o'clock, we shall dine very promptly at six. I go to the church to place fresh flowers on the altar of the Virgin. I meet the captain and officers of the staff going up the steps of the château with a captain of artillery. I attend to the preparations for dinner and decorate our vanilla dessert with frozen currants. At seven-thirty, I open the blinds of the billiard-room from the outside; the staff officers are still there, leaning over their cards. I knock at the door. Lieutenant de Lauzon absent-mindedly opens it.

'I have come to tell the captain I am just sitting down to dinner; let him join me when he can.'

The captain comes forward.

'I was going to send word to you, madame, that I could not be on time.'

'You don't eat the same things that I do, so it will not matter.'

I had hardly finished my soup when the captain appears in the small dining-room.

'*Ouf*, they have gone! After a row — and what a row!... orders — and such orders! My divisions separated... there is a depth of three divisions, and they are going to give to each a little of our regiment... They send our batteries about at random to be cut to pieces. I am the youngest

captain, and as the youngest they tear my batteries apart even more than the others; in short, it is no use to try to understand.'

From the corner of my eye I glance at my watch. I have time to allow the captain to dine quietly.

When I am down again with my hat and prayer-book, the great camions are there waiting for the batteries.

As we come out of the church, I pass a group of officers. They grumble: 'We were so comfortable here.'

'We had a most delightful welcome.'

'As we did nowhere else — and so they make us move on right away.'

A lieutenant runs after me. I have locked up canes and caps in the billiard-room. I unlock it... they snatch whatever they find there — books, cards, and the motors start off.

Fine moon; a suffocating summer night.

Two o'clock; just as I am about to go to sleep, there is a raid, a serious one this time.

Wednesday, May 21

Awake at six o'clock with a slight headache. Started immediately for the church... said *au revoir* to the officers who were waiting by the group of soldiers in marching kit. Passed the empty camions that were coming to fetch them.

The church still closed. Madame Thomas, the Patins, and some children are waiting before the door. The curé appears and a group of thirty persons join him, then children and young women gather to the procession at each house.

Soldiers call out to us: 'You go to walk early in the morning!'

A very faint noise, which grows louder... it is the *ron-ron* of the Boche birds of ill omen.

The curé calls upon us to halt. We separate into three groups to give a wider range for the bombs if they should

drop... the women tell their beads, the married women gossip a little, the children laugh — no one is afraid.

At Trois Étots the soldiers watch us pass, much amazed. M. le Curé turns at the church. Madame Thomas says: 'This isn't the place... the pilgrimage is for the Miraculous Chapel.'

At last there is the cross-road to Cernoy. We already have ten or a dozen people who have come in carriages, of whom Madame Tonnelier is one. Mother Fievé has put benches and chairs on the slope before the open door of the little chapel, which has been decorated with flowers and illuminated. People are at their doors, crying out, 'Why, it's all Pronleroy!'

Madame Frémont of Cernoy arrives, bringing chairs. We sing hymns... not too loud because of the airplanes. The trees that shelter the slope are supposed to conceal us.

The curé speaks... he tells of the evils predicted for France if she does not do penance. He exhorts us to prayer and sacrifice.

I am at the end of my strength. I nearly fainted in the middle of the Mass. This journey of three kilometres without eating was exhausting. There are a dozen communions. On our return, met the captain; he is better. All the soldiers have gone; only the captain, his orderly, and myself are left in the château.

Arrival of a lieutenant, organizer of the convoy of camions which carried the batteries... a dispute because too many vehicles were ordered. He seems much surprised that the captain knows nothing about it. I assure him that the captain is recovering from a serious illness.

The captain eats a little better than yesterday. We have coffee in the billiard-room. He talks about the war. He hopes not to come back from it, feeling that, after the life of tremendous action which he has known, the jog-jog of the commonplace life of the garrison would seem unbearably

dull... otherwise he would prefer to go into the Colonial army of the South, in a country not yet pacified. The only possibility that makes him afraid is to return disabled... if only women were still disposed to look after him — but after five or six years the cripples would be pariahs.

We talk of fear. No brave but sincere man can say that at a certain moment he is not afraid. On the Chemin des Dames when a soldier covered with blood informed him that his battery had been buried alive — a battery which he had not commanded, of which he hardly knew the location — his military duty drove him forward into the branches of the trench which were enfiladed by the machine guns... he headed for the battery, saying to himself at every step, 'I am going back' — and still going forward... the beast in him reared up, saw only the uselessness of the sacrifice... everybody had surely died. He found the battery, had it dug out, and had the satisfaction of carrying away the lone survivor, who was not too badly smashed up.

That evening there was a procession of airplanes and the hullabaloo farther away than usual.

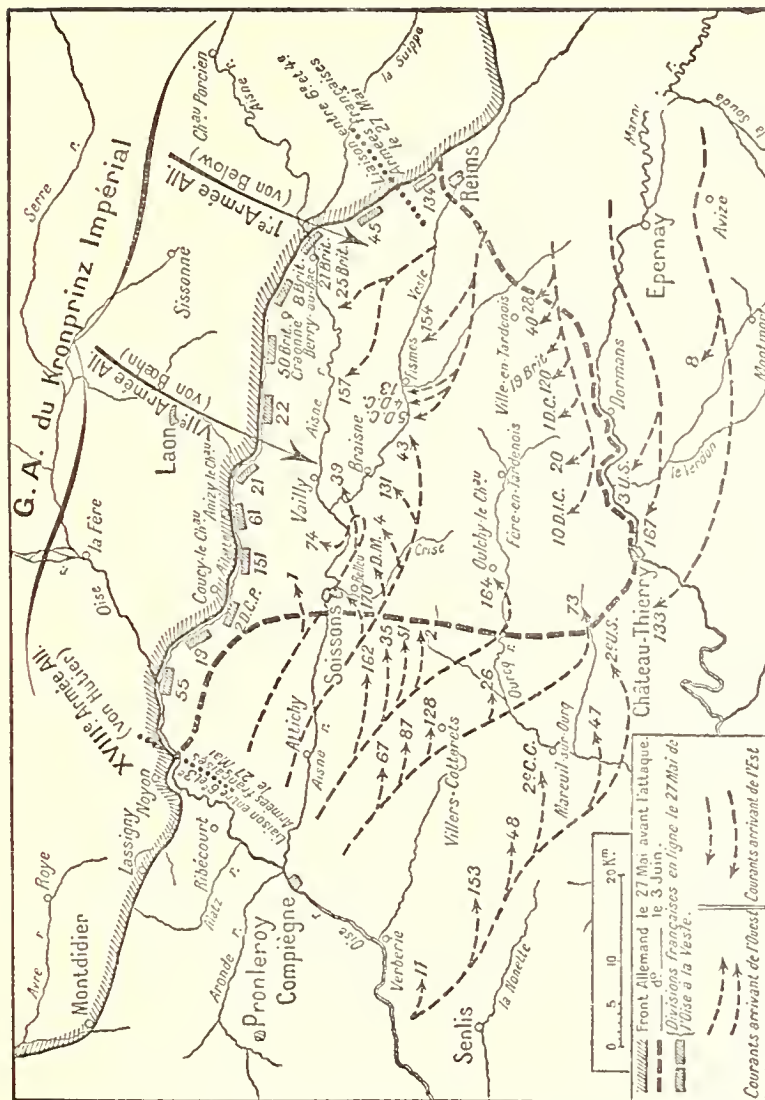
May 22

At seven-fifteen the orderly hands me a package, the captain's book. Paul Podbille his name is. He presses my hand for the last time, we wish each other good luck, then the captain drives away in his little motor, turning to see if I am still at the window.

Heavy bombardment at two in the morning. Three bomb explosions very near.

May 27

As soon as I am dressed, I take up my duties as inn-keeper. I make a tour of the courtyard of the farm to see what is happening to my animals and my fodder... few men, few horses; there have been departures during the night.



THE THIRD BATTLE OF THE AISNE: OPERATIONS FROM MAY 27 TO JUNE 3, 1918

In the afternoon, couriers going and coming. The country is full of troops going up or down — contradictory orders. No one understands anything, especially civilians.

A long, agonizing day. At seven o'clock, just as I am sitting down to dinner, some one asks for me from the kitchen. It is an officer who has alighted in a great hurry. He stands in the doorway.

'Madame, the orderly has just come from the mayor's office. The colonel and his officers will be quartered at this château, the battery in your servants' quarters. Have you some one to instruct my orderly?'

'No, nobody. But I am used to it; I will show him.'

'Ah, madame... do you know...?'

'Know what?'

'Why, madame, the offensive, the great German rush has started!'

The officer said this in such a tone of anguish that it dealt me a blow.

'But where is this offensive?'

'On the Champagne-Reims-Soissons front.'

The orderly arrives; a blond child, very young, whom the château intimidates. He loses the way between two staircases.

'I'll never find my way in this rookery.'

'But, yes; see, you have numbers on the doors of the rooms and underneath cards on which to write the names of the officers. Besides, I shall be here when you come to put you on the right track. What time will it be?'

'The regiment detrains at Moyenneville about nine o'clock.'

Night had fallen slowly; a marvelous night — warm, fragrant, luminous; the moon, almost pink, huge, and ironical, one might say, shed its sorrowful light. The guns wake up, give voice, new batteries keep joining in... the roar and grumble and whistling become formidable, the

horrible missiles follow on each other's heels. There is the first passage, then the cataclysmic crash, then the indescribable explosion of the shell.

Half an hour of relative tranquillity — then a second squadron, and this will maneuver for hours above the country!... Explosions which seem directly over us... Did that one fall in the park? On the château? The walls tremble and the windows rattle without any let-up.

I think of my responsibility toward my servants... a war widow and mother of an only child; ought I to send them down to the cellar? But the little fellow has a bad cold, is coughing, and the cellar is damp. I must wait for advice... The regiment will soon arrive and I shall know which course to take. It is two o'clock... this suspense is too much for a woman's nerves; the fact is I am frightened, absolutely frightened. I leave my window in the hall from which I was watching and go to the northern attic. The horizon is on fire. Bombs, searchlights, fusées... these form the most terrifying and fairylike exhibitions of fireworks and seem near enough to touch with the hand. Black shadows against a screen... still another Boche squadron... I go down again into the hall. It seems to me that the next bomb will be for us, and there will be an end of this nameless anguish.

What is happening to the unfortunate regiment which detrained under this frightful aerial bombardment? Midnight — nothing. One o'clock... little gleams at the end of the avenue... cyclists, the rumbling of carriages, the clashing of bits, horses neighing... the court filled with many horsemen. Here is the regiment. I am no longer afraid; it seems to me that everything is safe. I rush up to the first person who mounts the staircase in the diffused light of its electric lamp. He announces himself:

‘The colonel.’

‘The owner. Is the fighting near us?’

'Rather a warm demonstration, but it all comes from above. The squadron had scented us out, and didn't wish to let us go... bombed us as we left the cars during the detrainment. On La Neuville road, a second bombardment took everybody by the flank in the ditches; some horses killed, but not too much damage.'

'Are you sure these bombs aren't going to drop on the château?'

'There are bombs which shake the ground like that. We are at least one kilometre from the point of fall, and I speak as an artillerist, you know. There is also the starting of our batteries, not far away, with all that accursed uproar, contrary to orders, for the regiment no longer goes to Champagne... but you are pale as death, madame... you are alone here... aren't you afraid?'

'Yes, for once.'

'You must pull yourself together; it is all over. Where will you put me up?'

'Here is the generals' chamber.'

'The deuce; here is canteen enough for me! Come and have a piece of chocolate with me; that will restore your morale. I have some excellent Swiss chocolate with nuts. I'll show you on the map where the firing is from and where the bombs crash.'

The colonel takes out his map and makes me follow with my finger the red marks, calls for glasses, mixes a little whiskey and water, and has me drink it. I then leave him.

What about these officers who are in the corridors with the orderly, who is lost between my two stairways? I must attend to my business of hostess now. I no longer am afraid at all.

The next day we learn that the German bombs of that tragic night had killed on the spot all the men serving the anti-air battery of La Neuville -- the battery lying half a kilometre, as the bird flies, from Pronleroy.

May 29

Trip to Orléans decided upon... much business in connection with my daughters' inheritance from their grandmother, and also some provision for their future.

The news is bad. Soissons is taken... the Boche advance is developed and very murderous. Bombs have killed thirty people in the Compiègne station... destroyed the restaurant and killed some men on leave. Saw at Creil, on passing, much broken glass, the tiled roof of the station torn off, but no real disaster. At the Gare du Nord a porter takes me to the information office. At Paris I cannot obtain any pass for our district. Simone, who is in a fever to return to Pronleroy with me, will have to wait for special permission for which I have made application to General Guillaumat.

I have a hasty breakfast at the terminal. Impossible to find a carriage. 'Big Bertha' is firing now every three quarters of an hour. A soldier on leave brings me a motor which an employee of the station enters with me and we three start for the Gare d'Orsay. Two hours waiting. I bend under the weight of my valises... to move people to pity and find help, I represent myself as a person from the Oise who has been bombed out and is moving with all she has been able to save... an old lady carries one valise for me. All the cars are full, the seats engaged. From the aisle in which I am seated on my valise, I ask permission to place my other package on the seat. A wounded officer apologizes for not being in condition to help me.

June 2

A very troublesome return journey with Simone. The mayor of Pronleroy has sent me papers so that my daughter can enter the zone. It is agreed that she shall pass a week at the château and then, like a good girl, return to Orléans and Angers.

June 6

Being very curious to see the tanks — for no one calls them anything else — Simone and I set out to look for them. We take a narrow path, avoiding the sentries at the entrance of the parking-place, and come suddenly without any one seeing us upon the grass plot where these monsters are arranged in line. Through the door of the open shed we see the gleaming machinery, the yawning maws of the great guns, the turrets with their loopholes, the benches in the back for the men. These cars are much smaller than I supposed. No officer... soldiers are eating, laughing, and playing like children, sitting on the ground. From the grass plot we enter my woods... the tanks have passed clean through the hedge and are ambushed there... we see them on all sides.

A non-com. raises his arms to heaven in a furious manner.

‘Are there no sentries here to keep away civilians? Nobody ought to see these, don’t you understand?’

I adopt a high and mighty tone:

‘The fact is, my good fellow, that I am at home here. I am the owner of these woods.’

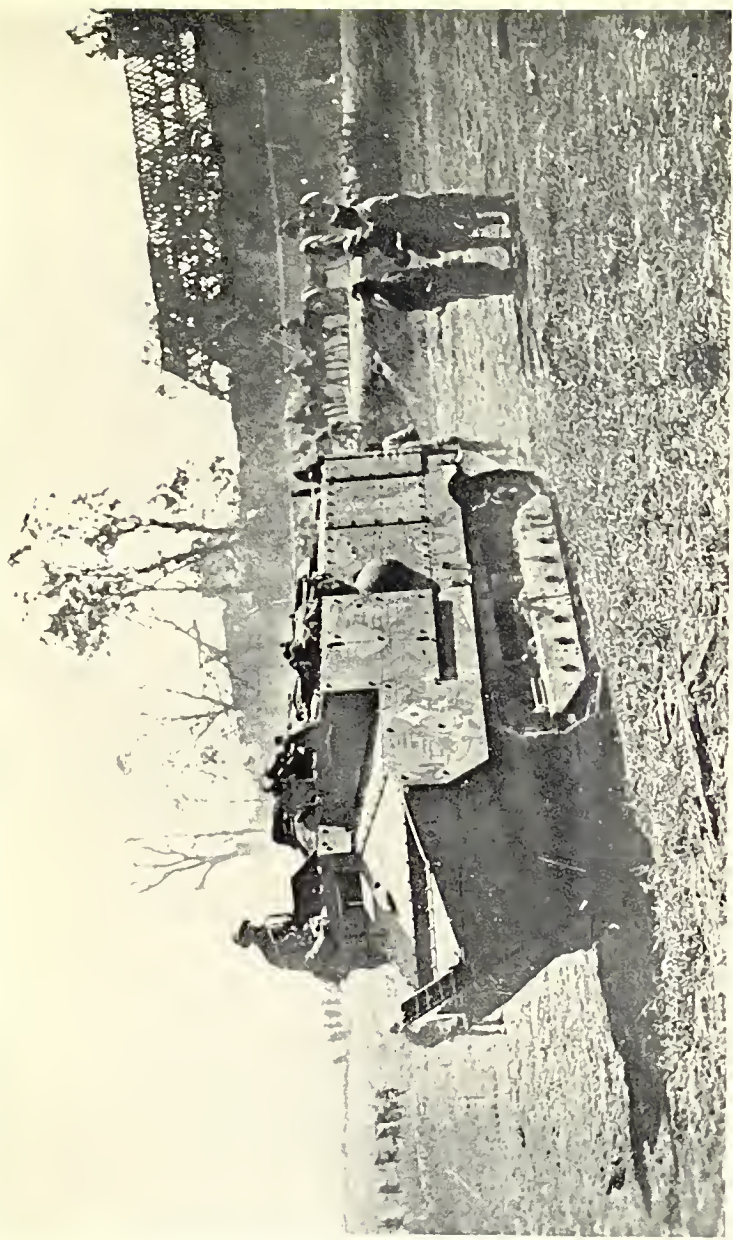
‘To the devil with owners!’ But my keeper, Aristide, arrives with an officer of rank, who estimates the damage done by the passage of the tanks, and that turns the wrath of this man who foregathers with them. We walk along by the longest way to see also the picturesque encampment and the tents of the officers.

A young girl — especially the young lady of the château — creates the due effect.

‘To have nice little women like that — our little women of France — is worth the trouble of fighting for years,’ muttered a soldier, raising his nose from his porringer.

‘Little women like me... they’re not for soldiers,’ muttered my offended daughter, but so low that they did not hear.

Later we go through the woods, Simone and I, to make



..AISNE NEAR CHAUDUN: A TANK RETURNING FROM BATTLE

our pilgrimage to the Miraculous Virgin of Cernoy. There is cavalry massed under the forest trees of Pronleroy; a line regiment at Cernoy, a lunch-table on the mound, at the door of the little chapel, which is open. My daughter lights her candle and, our prayers said, we go to Fievé's at the inn. She is the mother of my former servant — who is still living... her second son killed, the third missing.

On returning, we find a group of tank officers seated on the wall near the gate. I invite them to enter the park.

'It is all in flower, would you allow us to pick some roses, madame? That would give us so much pleasure.'

'Pick all you please.'

A man on a bicycle arrives at full speed.

'Captain?'

'What is it?'

'Captain, dinner is served in the woods.'

'Let the dinner wait, don't bother me; we're on flower duty, we're picking tea roses.' This little captain, so quick and young, spends his time lying on the terrace with officers of the chasseurs, always nibbling a rose! He has the air of a willful child, the gliding, dancing gait of a black tragic Pierrot.

Saturday, June 8

A relatively peaceful day... my daughter hesitates about returning to her room on the first floor. Being unaccustomed to raids or aerial bombardments, they make her jump, so she has transported her household gods into an obscure anteroom on the ground floor in a part of the wing which puts several floors between her and the explosions. She sleeps very well in that cellar, and by day she moves into her own apartment.

Sunday, June 9

I fall asleep to the usual roaring of the cannon and the rumbling of the airships.

A great blow shakes my door. Half-dazed with sleep, I open my eyes.

My daughter cries: 'The troops are going away... that was the alarm... the offensive has begun on our front!'

I go into the hall... officers, orderlies, soldiers, everybody rushing madly about in the darkness, broken by the sudden gleams of electric lamps and intense sinister flares which ring the horizon. The roar of the artillery is continuous. The commandant gives me a brief salute as he goes down the staircase; Captain Launay comes up to me.

'You must have confidence; we shall prevent them from passing, but have you any masks? Beware of the odor of chocolate; that means gas of the very worst kind.'

The little surgeon comes running by:

'Here we are; the wave of gas has come into the courtyard. Have all the doors and windows closed, and go up as high as possible.'

A servant asks for the keys to the dining-room. Instead of going up the stairs to take them to him, Simone rushes across the courtyard. She assures us that there is no longer any smell there. But I continue to breathe with great difficulty; besides, I have a bad headache. I fall asleep with fatigue. Simone sits up with me awhile, then throws herself on the mattress of her own bed. The cannonade subsides a little.

Five o'clock... the cannonade is now very threatening again and comes appreciably nearer. We hear the sharp and strident crash of the explosions.

The cook and an orderly of the chasseurs are in the kitchen; one of them brings me a cup of scalding coffee. We go down to Simone's retreat... in that inside room, without air or light, the noise is very much deadened. But seeing nothing and knowing nothing make a terrible impression on me, and especially feeling that my daughter has arrived just in time for the worst threat, since we are in-

volved in an active battle and one that is moving toward us. I have taken up a book left open on the billiard-table by the chasseurs — 'Ida Saint Elmo.' It is of no use for me to read the same sentences two or three times... I can't understand anything... I can't make any sense out of them... all my brain can do is count the explosions, measure the distances. Everything cracks and shivers and trembles all about us. I cannot remain seated. I prefer to wander from the kitchen to the attic. We have kept a connection with the battalion... it has arrived in the thick of it, and is in line in front of Méry.

At eight o'clock we start for church. I want the curé to say a Low Mass at once. Who knows what may happen between now and ten-thirty? The Abbé Vignette pays no attention to the battle: the service will take place as usual — the Low Mass at Cressonsacq, the High Mass with sermon at Pronleroy.

We take tea in my bedroom and decide, my daughter and I, to pack up the silverware, the family souvenirs, and the most valuable bibelots. Moreover, under the spur of danger, of disaster hanging over one's head, the only way for a woman's nerves to hold out is to absorb herself in some occupation in which all her faculties are on the alert. One no longer reflects, one gives one's self up very diligently to wrapping miniatures and fragile pieces of plate in silk paper.

At ten-thirty we start for Mass. There are many people in the church. The roaring of the cannon is magnified under the arches, becomes more and more alarming. That Mass, so long-drawn-out, was one of the tortures of my life. At any instant a shell might bury us under the débris of the church. In no place were we any longer in safety. The curé adds a sermon on the Vow to the Sacred Heart, on the consecration of France, demanded by Louis XIV. At noon we were still there... I dare not set the example

of leaving. Finally, the last Amen rings out and I rush for the news. In the village the situation seems the same... convoys of munitions still marching off to the guns toward the north. The liaison officer of the chasseurs informs us that the battalion is still in the second line, in the woods of Méry... one of the officers is seriously wounded, the sapper who repaired the pump on Friday, killed.

The cook and orderly assure us that we run the very greatest risk... the main line of fire doesn't have to reach much farther for the shells to fall on the château. 'At least, we are near with our carriage and the pony to take the ladies away if matters become absolutely impossible. Our officers will send word from time to time, but, meanwhile, if I were you ladies, I would go down into the cellars and take everything that I could.'

Those good people busy themselves with sending a hot meal to their officers in thermos bottles and those fine cakes of which there were so many for yesterday's reception. Finally, they propose to take down pictures and carry furniture to the cellar.

A subaltern arrives on the terrace, dead with fatigue, covered with dust and perspiration.

'Isn't the Twentieth Artillery here?'

'Why, no.'

'It must be farther on, then.' He departs philosophically.

Next is a squad of cavalry riding at full speed which comes up the avenue. They send me one of the troopers.

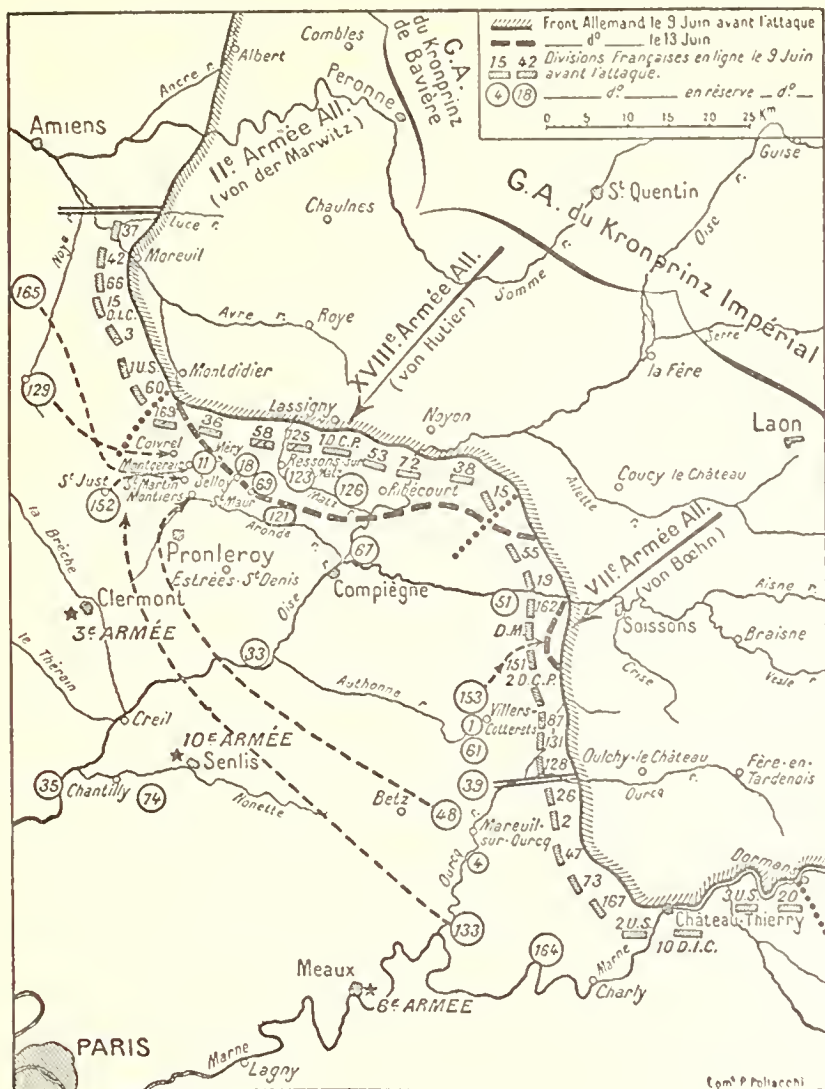
'Madame, we have come in search of our colonel.'

'He isn't here.'

'It isn't possible! Our colonel is in a château — when we saw this one we said to ourselves, "We shall find our colonel here"; but where is our colonel if he isn't here?'

'I can't tell you.'

'All right, *en route!*' And they start off at a gallop as they have come.



A courier of the chasseurs appears at the kitchen; I run there; the cook is weeping, the orderly is weeping, the courier is blowing his nose!

'Your lieutenant is wounded in the hip; X, the next in command, is killed; our officers are surrounded in the woods; they will never surrender. The Chasseur X is dead; some

of the others have disappeared. Ah, the devil, it is those damned artillerists that gave way... the whole line broken between Cuvilly and Estrées, caught by the gas — accursed stuff! One gets killed where he stands, like the chasseurs!’

About two o’clock a lieutenant and surgeon of artillery come up the avenue, knock at the half-open door of the great hall, enter very shyly, covered with dust, exhausted, and gasping with strange, fixed looks.

‘Can you possibly put us up this evening, madame?’

‘Is it a billet, lieutenant?’

‘No; there are only a few.’ He gives his name.

‘M. de P——. From the Côtes-du-Nord. We have lost everything: guns, munitions, and baggage... we were overcome by the wave of gas. Men falling suffocated, gasping for breath like madmen — a perfect hell!’

‘Please sit down; you seem so ill — are you hungry?’

‘Drink, something to drink; our throats are on fire...’

I bring them Spanish wine which they drown in water and refuse bread and biscuits.

A captain passes through very quickly and goes to his room... he seems more clear-headed; a few soldiers, a cook carrying bread, another a basket of eggs; like the officers, they are poisoned and wander like somnambulists about the kitchen and in the right wing, where we have given them quarters and lighted a fire for them. At four o’clock we carry tea to the two officers who are prostrate on the porch; rum and bread and butter revive them.

Five o’clock

A staff automobile thunders up... commandant introduces himself:

‘M. de Cantigny, Thirty-Fifth Corps from Montiers.’

‘Is it still there?’

‘We were bombed good and plenty last night without great damage. To-night, we shall perhaps be stationed here. I have come to look over the château and report.’

We all talk while walking from the cellar to the attic.

‘Yes; the offices could be set up very easily in the salon... there are sufficient bedrooms... but the news of the day is bad. Where will our backward movement stop? Those two regiments of artillery caught by the gas have fled in disorder to the rear, the breach has opened between Estrées and Cuvilly — Courcelles has been taken and retaken; Gournay is near being flanked. If the staff comes here, the units thrown into the whirlpool will hold. But what does any one know? I am going on to see the mayor and report at Montiers.’

The motor disappears. I go down the avenue to speak to the mayor also, when another staff motor, whirling about, overtakes me at the gate, an officer jumps out and says, ‘I am looking for the Commandant de Cantigny; there is no one to give you information in this accursed country from which all the people have fled like rabbits.’

The orders are changed; the staff will take up its quarters at the château in an hour. We find the motors and the commandant in front of the mayor’s office, but the mayor is absent; it is absolutely necessary that we see him, — there is no time to lose.

‘Can you take us where we can find him?’ I acquiesce and say, as we pass Madame Dupérour’s, that if any one sees M. Tonnelier to send him to the mayor’s office and that they had better look for him on his farm. We are in such a rush that it never comes into the officer’s head to offer me a seat in the car, so I stand on the running-board and cling to the door while I guide the driver in the roundabout streets of the village to M. Tonnelier’s house. Nor can we find him here. His wife is in tears.

‘All is lost, madame; the Germans are coming forward; there is nothing left to do but cry.’

‘But no,’ grumbles the little lieutenant. ‘Courcelles was taken again. For the moment we are holding.’

I set off with the lieutenant, this time in the car in spite of the maps spread out there. Returning to the mayor's office, we find that the commandant and M. Tonnelier have arrived at the same time. The commandant turns to me:

'Madame, we need about twenty desks, beds for two hundred men, telephones, etc.; in short, the whole of the staff will be with you. Go with madame, lieutenant, and look after the preliminary preparations.'

Arrived at the château, another difficulty: it is my servant Juliette, who weeps and declares she will go away at once with her child. Joséphine, the gardener's mother, tries to stop her. I remember my isolated artillerymen, and that I have set aside bedrooms for them. I ask the lieutenant what I am to do.

'Oh, as for them' — shrugging his shoulders — 'the sight of the staff insignia will be enough to make them clear out.' And, in fact, they had disappeared, no one knew where.

We hastily prepare a slight supper of eggs and milk. I have regained all my strength, but my daughter can do no more. It is impossible to leave her on the ground floor beside offices which will be occupied night and day. Joséphine and Juliette fix her up in her chamber and she sleeps the sleep of youth amidst the thunder of the cannonade.

The camions begin to shower men and *matériel* in the courtyard. Cases, desks, typewriters, the telephone switchboard, the wireless, maps, canteens — all these are engulfed by the great open doors all night. Commandant Cantigny himself assigns the lodgings... every man's name is written over the door. At last he wipes his brow with satisfaction. 'Now they're all taken care of except Captain d'Andurain. I will put him somewhere else.'

'No; that will not do! He is the only officer that I know; he has done me a service, and I will not have him put outside.'

'You must straighten out the mess yourself, then.'

Since there are no more bedrooms, I will give him the little pink salon.

There are no orderlies; they will arrive to-morrow. They give me a staff of four secretaries, very nice boys who carry furniture about just like the others. They bring mattresses into the pink room and a dressing-table, and sweat blood and water to make it a livable room; then the lieutenant arrives.

'Everything's changed. Commandant Vizentini does not come to-night; we shall put Captain d'Andurain in his place and the couriers in the rooms below.

I object. 'No; the couriers shall remain where they are. I am writing a note to Captain d'Andurain, which explains the room that I have prepared for him, since I don't choose that he should get the most miserable room in the château, and what I have done, I have done for him personally.' I go to take the note to the secretary to give to the captain on his arrival.

I have taken sheets from the cupboards; there are still sixteen beds to make. 'The fact is we have never made officers' beds before,' say my young men.

'I'll show you how.' They yield very amiably. Some one throws at my door the rubbish from the chasseurs' rooms — all that they forgot when they left. On Commandant Benier's mantel, I find an exquisitely polite note, written for me at one o'clock in the morning.

All the staff's mechanics are at work... they are laying electric cables through the doors of the salon; they are piercing walls and boring holes, and wires cross and inter-cross... the horns of motors, the rumbling of camions which wander about the courtyard, noise of hammering, of calling, of boots running up and down stairs... we no longer notice the thunder of the cannon.

The furniture of the great yellow salon has been piled up in front of the window at the rear. The tables of the chief of staff and the deputy chief are each set before its own window surrounded by screens.

I have had requisitions issued for the military beds piled in my barn, the key of which the mayor has, to take care as well as possible of the clerks of the different services. We invade attics, garrets, stairways, landings, secret stairways; the corners and hidden détours, that go with an old château. These young people lose themselves and find themselves again with a gayety which never forgets its youth.

The only thing left to do is to find a place for my young furniture-moving lieutenant: a rug, a cushion from a couch, and a carriage robe make up a bed for him, for which he thanks me warmly. The divans are already occupied, the billiard-table, on which a mattress has been thrown, will take care of two more. On the stroke of twelve I go to my room, and the racket which is going on below and above does not disturb my sleep, I am so worn out.

Monday, June 10

Up very early... meet in the library Captain d'Andurain. He thanks me for having given him such a pretty little salon. I ask him for news.

At first he is evasive. 'We are holding, for the moment.'

Then, very hesitatingly, I added; 'And I... what is going to become of me in all this?'

'You must stay where you are.'

'If I go with my daughter out of the zone of the armies, shall I be able to return?'

'Surely not.'

'But am I good for anything if I stay here?'

'Your presence alone may prevent the pillaging of the château. If you have the pluck, remain. But send away the young lady, your family treasure, jewelry and silverware. That is the advice which I would give to any woman in my family. The country is crowded with Colonial troops. They don't leave much of their lodging-places behind them if the owner isn't there. In an abandoned house — you

understand the meaning of the word abandon — the soldier finds himself at home... he burns, takes away whatever he likes. We are living in the time of war morals — officers can do nothing. As for myself, I'd try here, for the first few days, for gallantry's sake... but I couldn't hold them back. You see this mattress on the billiard-table, and tables and mattresses in the great hall? They come from Montiers, and it's not the soldiers alone who took them. Every one takes what pleases him — that is war, and I'm putting it as mildly as possible. If the impossible happens and, we do not hold, then it would be a *débâcle* — the evacuation of the civil population under shell-fire. Convoys laden with human cattle, so to speak, to the measure of their capacity ... your daughter separated from you, crowded into some camion or other with somebody or other to go somewhere or other. Furthermore, we may receive a bomb here on our heads at any moment... we must not expose a pretty face of eighteen to that risk. Take advantage of my desire to help. I am entirely at your service so long as we are not actually attacked. For the moment...' and he laughs, showing his charming youthfulness, not at all like the father of a family that he pretends to be... 'For the moment, I am a mere rag, clay in your hands. At the first signal of an attack, I become a bar of iron and can neither hear you nor know you.' He stops and reflects for a moment.

'What I propose is this: take your daughter as far away as possible. You will make the most difficult part of the journey along with her... there are ways of coming and going to Beauvais... we will place a small van at your disposal with the staff flag. The roads, which are closed to all vehicles, will be open to you. At Beauvais the trains must still be running... put your daughter in a car and send her... where are you sending her?'

'To Angers to my Coutade relatives.'

'I will go now and attend to the formalities.'

'Yes; but there is my daughter's consent to be considered. She won't want to leave me behind her in danger.'

'I will speak to her and make her understand what a source of anxiety she is to you — to us all.'

'There is also my cook and her child.'

'I will go and talk with Sainte-Pérceuse about sending them away. I will send you some men who will help you get ready. Even a baby camion is fairly large... you will be able to put a good many of your things in it.'

Two orderlies come, then, to notify me that everything must be ready at three o'clock. The soldiers get busy.

'We must get started as early as possible. Such fine furniture!'

We bring up from the cellar all that we took down yesterday and put it on the stoop ready to be loaded. The soldiers go to eat and so do we... we must swallow something — eggs and tea. Then I go to the bedroom to draw up my will. Simone will take it to the notary in Angers. We pack some of my clothes. We have to consider that I may be driven away from here, and I must not land on my relatives like the poor refugees who carry two chemises in a handkerchief.

Here is the van and an unknown non-com., a good-looking fellow, who jostles everybody, laughs and shouts at the same time, and does as much work as four — Eddy, upholsterer at Soissons, whom I shall have many opportunities to meet in the future. He takes possession as by authority of the valuable furniture.

'This must go, and this, and this too...' The courage of these fine men is reassuring. Finally, Eddy has packed the three finest consoles, the marquetry commodes, the Louis XV screen, the tapestry, and is still prowling around the salon. Still there is room; he takes one object here, another there; places are found for fourteen big pictures, many small ones, all the arms, and many chests. Simone brings small things laden with memories. I hurry the departure... my

heart is breaking. Simone is also moved. We are all ready, a surplus cloak over our knees, for to-day the weather has changed. We shall never have room with the two soldiers on the seat of the van. I squeeze up against the driver, the other soldier takes his seat almost on Simone's feet. We start very slowly among an inextricable mob of camions and cyclists. At the end of the street, on a wagon into which people and furniture are being loaded, Drouin throws up his arms and cries:

'What, madame, are you running away, too!'

'Why, no; I am going to take away Mademoiselle, then I am coming back.'

We take the Cressonsacq road... empty convoys pass, going for munitions. We meet wagons full of refugees; lines of people on foot pushing wheelbarrows and go-carts; lines of frightened cattle, running in all directions; it is the heart-breaking exodus of a people flying before an invasion. A wagon is across the road; a horse mad with fear, held by two women, is rearing and rushing about. The women shout... a gendarme gets down... our soldier hurries to help, too. They calm the beast and get him back to the side of the road. We start again; the wind is cold and it rains a little. On the road to Clermont, as we ascend the great ridge, we can see better on the horizon the line of fire forming a semicircle: the artillery duel has begun anew and is becoming more and more violent. We go forward slowly, so great is the throng of refugees, the tangle of convoys. Barbed wire is stretched on either side of the road, there are piles of *chevaux-de-frise*, barricading the road; trenches are dug; a place of retreat is ready for the troops.

Everywhere our staff flag has opened all roads. At two kilometres from Clermont the gendarme pitilessly denies us passage over a road reserved for marching regiments. We have to make a détour by Breuil and pass by Fitz-James; at the gate of the château one of the pavilions is half-demol-

ished. It was done by a bomb last night, aimed at General Humbert's headquarters.

A less dense crowd of refugees... still some regiments marching. In the midst of these poor creatures dragging their legs, one feels a certain selfish satisfaction in rolling along in a comfortable vehicle which makes some speed. We pass through the village of la Rue Saint-Pierre, and skirt the forest of Hez, which is stuffed with troops. Here are the first outskirts of Beauvais, where the ravages of the aerial bombardments are very severe... groups of four and five houses destroyed by shells even to the cellars; deserted streets with yawning excavations. Some few wagons on which people are loading furniture... almost all the houses closed and barricaded... the appearance of catastrophe is much more noticeable than at Pronleroy. We arrive at the station and accost an employee, a very ill-tempered man, who throws up his hands.

'A train? But there aren't any more trains for a civilian, there isn't any merchandise being carried. The last convoy went this morning.'

Much put out, I give the address of Colonel G.'s wife... perhaps I shall be able to leave my furniture with her, while waiting the resumption of traffic. We find the house closed ... a neighbor who was looking out the window cries:

'Madame G. has gone away... everybody went away during the bombardment... it was horrible last night, six houses struck near the cathedral.'

Not knowing where to go, we return to the station. By dint of insisting, I succeed in seeing the train-master; he receives me very ill, being beside himself with demands for cars.

'No; you can't leave your furniture anywhere here. You must go farther on. Go to Gisors, where the traffic is still moving.'

'But I am in a staff vehicle. I can give no orders to the

soldiers who are with me; this van has to go back at six o'clock... I can't leave my furniture on the sidewalk.'

'Take it away; you won't be the first one. We can't do anything with it.'

'Let's go to the bishop's house. I know one of the upper clergy; perhaps we shall find help there.'

At the door the servant cries: 'Are you ladies bombed out?'

'In great danger of being. Is M. l'Abbé here?'

We are received with great kindness.

'You must get to Gisors... it's the only safe place... to-night it is impossible. All that I can do is offer you a corner of my study, where they keep the church ornaments and the sacred goldsmithery saved by the army camions of the regions which have been evacuated — it's no guaranty of safety... the Convent of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul was almost destroyed by shells yesterday, and a shell fell twenty metres from here; they are aiming at the cathedral... we're in a dangerous neighborhood... to-night it will rain and we shall be comparatively quiet.'

It is raining in sheets; under that deluge we unload chests and trunks on the porch and place them in the study. The maid gives a look and says:

'M. l'Abbé asks that you leave him only room to go to his desk and write.'

A nurse from the S.B.M. in a white blouse comes from the arched entrance. She addresses my soldiers... asks for a man who is willing to help her load furniture.

'We don't belong here... we simply brought Madame la Marquise here.'

The nurse bemoans her fate, and complains of the absence of organization. She can find no help. Wagons are provided only for bombed houses; that is to say, when there is nothing left to save. Her name is Madame L., chief nurse at 3 rue

du Palais. I give my own name and add that I am from Pronleroy.

'But I know who you are, madame! I attended to your request for clothing for the poor curé who was evacuated at Pronleroy; we sent him a parcel yesterday to the station at Clermont.'

I explain my anxiety as to my daughter.

'If Mademoiselle de Foucault will come with me, I can put her up to-night; in case of alarm I have a cellar which is considered perfectly safe; she shall share my modest dinner. I have returned from the front momentarily to send my furniture to the rear. We will work together... we will unite our efforts and try to save everything. I have come from the hospital at X, where I was with Mademoiselle de Chabot.'

'My cousin Françoise?'

'Yes, that's her name.'

My daughter comes back from the station, where she has made a last attempt to obtain a written requisition for a wagon, representing herself as being bombed out. Nothing to be had. We place the last boxes in the study in the midst of a rustling of brocades, of gold-embroidered chasubles, of gold work of all sorts, marvels of the sacred art. My soldiers have errands to do for the staff... they go out to make their purchases. We are to meet again behind the church.

'The cathedral?'

'I don't know; the gendarme said behind the church — a parking-place for army motors.'

'The church of Saint-Étienne, perhaps?'

They make a vague gesture and start off quickly.

I go with my daughter to the rue du Palais, a pretty little old-fashioned house. Madame L. has gone out... I leave word that my daughter will dine and sleep with her.

At the end of the street a nurse makes signs to us; it is

Madame L. Since there is nothing to be obtained at the station, Madame L. will take my daughter to headquarters; General Guillaumat has promised that American camions will be placed at the disposition of certain civilians... my daughter will have the advantage of whatever influence there may be in naming some of the generals and colonels whom she happens to have in her family. Madame L. will present her. Madame L. said this was the third time she had been to headquarters to-day. My daughter will get to Gisors, will put the furniture on the train, ask the hospitality of a cousin there, and finally reach Angers.

Deeply moved, I kiss my daughter and go. At the corner of the street, I notice that I have not given Simone the money that she needs for her journey. I return to the house and ring... my daughter opens the door and I give her a big bunch of notes, all that I possess, and start off in search of the van. On the square of Saint-Étienne there are several army trucks, and I question their drivers.

‘No, no car with a staff flag here. Look around the cathedral.’

I look for it, but cannot find it. I hurry to the bishop's palace. The son of the concierge takes me to another automobile stand. Nothing there either. It is after six o'clock. If only the van, not finding me at Saint-Étienne, hasn't started off without me! What would happen to me with no way of getting back and without any money! I start off running and lose myself in back streets. I happen upon Madame L. and my daughter returning from headquarters. The general was charming; he will order a van to take her to Gisors to-morrow.

‘Everything is all right,’ my daughter assures me, full of pep. The ladies lead me by the shortest way to Saint-Étienne; the van is there without the drivers. I step into the abandoned van. I wrap myself in my cloak, for the rain is cold... borne on the wind bursts of religious music are

heard from the square... a few faithful are arriving for Vespers.

I have a long wait. At last, here are my drivers loaded down like donkeys. They take stock.

'I have the wine and the grub.'

'I have the letter-paper, slippers, perfumery; the Bénédictine tooth-powder — none at all; no eau-de-Cologne — how they will swear!'

'Have you been to the department store?'

'No, we haven't found...'

I point to the road. A gendarme stops the van roughly, glances with an evil eye at the lady that is crowded in between two drivers.

'Army truck, no women.'

'Army orders!' cries the chauffeur triumphantly.

'Show your papers!'

The gendarme bows. 'You're all right; pass.'

The little soldier disappears in the department store, then comes back perplexed.

'They have a bottle of Bénédictine tooth-powder for fifteen francs, very small. Shall I take it?'

'Sure,' replied the soldier. 'Never mind about the prices; they don't care a sou about them; but when an officer says he wants something, get it for him... that and nothing else. Eau-de-Cologne? You haven't any money? Here you are... forty francs... that's not bad for a swell bottle... and a big one, too... The captain will be very glad to get it.'

This time we start off quickly to make up for the hour of delay.

We pass some soldiers who have lost their way.

'Where are you going?'

'Saint-Just.'

'Straight ahead... but why the devil are you going where the shells are, without being ordered to?'

We drive at eighty miles an hour through troops, who

move aside as if by magic for this meteor with the staff flag. I think my drivers, who are in very high spirits, have had a little something to drink. The forest of Hez lies asleep in the mist. We try to obtain from employees at the station the package sent for the refugees by the Comité de Secours.

‘Too late; come again to-morrow.’

We are compelled to slacken our speed... the exodus of refugees bars the road. The artillery roars more and more. At a turn in the road the horizon seems to be all on fire.

‘That’s Pronleroy burning!’ I cried.

A barrage, gendarmes, halted troops, camions, an inextricable mix-up. The soldier at my left leaps from the seat into the road to get information.

‘It’s Montdidier and the country around there which is burning... and five villages which they are evacuating... particularly Cressonsacq and La Neuville-Roye.’

‘And Pronleroy?’ I ask in anguish.

‘No’... the gendarme didn’t hear anything to that effect. At Pronleroy a mob of men, horses, and camions.

‘Surely there’s something going on,’ my soldiers say.

Here is the avenue... motors of the Thirty-Fifth Corps in a line at the left of the avenue and a score of motors at the right.

‘What is all the excitement about?’... my drivers keep repeating. A fair-haired slim captain, very young in manner, a figure vaguely familiar, advances toward me, Captain Rochebouet. I don’t hear the name in the roaring of the motors. He sees that I don’t recognize him, and he repeats.

‘Captain de Rochebouet. You lived in Angers, madame. My name is not unknown to you... I have just arrived with my general.’

The group of officers, who press forward over the porch, sing out, ‘General Mangin is here!’

I am much astonished, and have a feeling of much pride as well.

‘Mangin is here...’ everything is all right then. Every one feels it and knows it.

Captain d’Andurain comes up.

‘I am going to take M. de Rochebouet into the pink salon with me, but we must have a room for the general.’

‘I’ll give him my daughter’s room, but I must have a moment to get it ready.’

My fatigue has disappeared.

Juliette, Marcel, and I take up armfuls of the clothes lying around, empty the bureau, and put everything in a heap in my room. We also empty the contents of a trunk ... some rare porcelains which we thought had been put in safe-keeping. In war-time furniture and bibelots do a great deal of traveling.

Ba-Ba, the general’s magnificent Negro, laughs with all his white teeth, glides about the bedroom arranging clothes and toilet-articles while soldiers install electric lights and telephones. I go to the courtyard. A group of officers are on the porch smoking very nervously, while waiting for dinner which will be ready in a minute.

The generals are in conference. I ask if we should go down into the cellars which have been prepared for bomb-shelters. They advise me to go and rest quietly in my room.

‘Bombs from airplanes — one evil chance in ten thousand!’

June 11

Violent raid of German aeroplanes during the night. Harmless explosion of a bomb, which fell close at hand.

At seven o’clock refugees come and go from the pavilion, bringing back the keys and cooking-utensils which we have lent them. Juliette brings me my breakfast for the last time. The noise is redoubled, but it is only harmless firing an orderly tells me.

I go up to the attic to the observatory window; it is open. On the terraced roof Colonel Loiseau, of the staff of the

Thirty-Fifth Corps, is walking briskly, field-glass in hand. He says:

'Well? This is making quite a noise; we attack at ten o'clock. We took back three villages last night, of which Méry was lost last evening.'

I do not attach to this news the importance which it deserves. I ask if the furniture of the salon, that he told me yesterday should be taken away, should still be moved this morning.

'Oh, no; moving about in the salons; they will be full of officers to-day... no need of any more chairs in the dining-room. We shall lunch in successive groups. Are you going out this morning? If you are, try to reassure the people of Pronleroy who haven't yet fled. You can tell them that things are going *very, very well*.'

I go down quietly to carry this good news to Madame Tonnelier on her farm, which is on my road. When I reach the church square, I meet a torrent of troops of all arms who are rushing by the three forks to Estrées, Cernoy, La Neuville: zouaves, tirailleurs, Colonial infantry, machine-gun motors, cannon. The provost has set patrols at all the corners, where officers run about giving orders, regulating this current and directing it along the prescribed routes. The weather this morning is clear and beautiful. The bright sunlight is already warm at nine o'clock, the men appear weary, serious, but filled with energy.

Madame Dupérroux calls out to me:

'That's the Fourth Tirailleurs passing by, the regiment that was at the château in 1916.'

I run up to the group of officers. No, it is the First. I don't recognize any one. The 101st and the Fourth Infantry passed from the direction of Cressonsacq... they remember both their encampment and myself and salute me. The regiment stops. I propose to the officers to come to the château for refreshments.

‘No, no; we are going right on.’

I hasten to bring a few bottles of wine from the cellar and a box of biscuits.

A noise as of something falling, and bricks drop at the foot of the church; they come from the spire, where some tiles have fallen off. Lieutenant de Kergos and another officer with field-glasses set up a watching-post there.

Still more cavalry coming up at a fast gallop in a cloud of dust and a continual stream of staff motors in the avenue... telephone line to be installed through the village.

I meet M. de Sainte-Péreuse, a very smart officer, a little cool at first, but extremely courteous. He accosts me:

‘There are people who returned last night to their houses; try to prevent them from going away again; we must avoid to-day all going and coming of civilians and an exodus of animals on the roads.’

I go to the Drouins’ and to the Crems’ to pass along this request.

I go up to my room to rest. A great white bird with tri-colored insignia flies northward over the château, so low as nearly to touch the roofs, then circles round over the fields.

‘Hoist the flag!’ cries Captain d’Andurain.

Two men run and display in the middle of the lawn a square of black cloth with a white star in the center; the airplane continues to go about in a circle, and fires off a rocket. The message from the front whirls about with its streamer of white cloth and drops in the grass near the black flag. Captain de Rochebouet is at the head of a group of officers who run to the place. He seizes the capsule, draws out the roll of paper, and carries it, still running, to the great hall where the staff chiefs and sub-chiefs are sitting.

From then on airships pass over us every fifteen minutes. They discharge their messages... all the unoccupied soldiers wandering in groups through the park watch for them and

fall upon them eagerly in the tall grass, which reaches to their waist.

Captain d'Andurain questions me: 'Do you realize, madame, that the day you have passed with us is the day of a victorious battle — the first in the war of movement?'

'Yes, I am beginning to understand.'

'Come and see the prisoners arrive; they have already brought in a column.'

The main kitchen is in the hands of the staff chefs... a small one has become the headquarters of the couriers. The cook of the battalion of chasseurs, who has remained in one of the pavilions and who is taking care of Juliette while she awaits her evacuation wagon, knows my state of destitution; he sends to my bedroom a very excellent hot breakfast in a small basket. I swallow it hurriedly; the prisoners are arriving and I want to see them.

There are only a few Boches, surrounded by gendarmes, who are being taken to the corner of the park.

I run into General Humbert and his orderly. He enters the large hall. On the terrace the officers, beaming with joy, all talk at once.

'The wood of Méry has been taken again...'

'They are killing Boches in swarms...'

I sit down on the doorstep of the Crem house... we see the pointed helmets at the top of the street; the column of prisoners appears, some sixty, with officers at their head... arrogant, or rather pretending to be — a dirty, exhausted troop, extremely young. One feels intense pride at seeing the conquered Boches march by... that enemy who yesterday seemed to us so threatening. It is the cruel spirit of victory.

Another column... this one of some thirty men, some wounded, three officers at the head.

On the porch our officers are smoking and talking, full of excitement. There is a great box of pigeons standing on the

steps. As I look at it, somewhat surprised, some one says:

'These are homing pigeons to carry the news... in case the telephone lines are cut, we shall need them.'

'We have passed Tricot and put the nest of machine guns at Boulogne-la-Grasse out of commission.'

'They are marching to Rollot.'

'The salient of Wacquemoulin, which was so alarming yesterday, has been pushed back.'

'The columns which had evacuated Maignelay yesterday have gone back there.'

'All the same, we are nine kilometres from the battle front.'

'Two shells fired short missed the château by only a hundred metres this morning.'

'We are living through an historic day.'

'Mangin's day!'

'The peculiar thing is that we are under everybody's orders. First, Mangin, then Humbert — and Pétain, who has just left here.'

'What? Has Pétain been here?' I ask.

'Yes, and those two who just came out of the salon are Fayolle and Estienne.'

I go to look at the prisoners' camp, which has been set up in the grass in the park, like a cattle-pen, between lines of barbed wire, guarded by sentries with fixed bayonets. The kitchen police, who bring them water in pails, mutter, 'To think we have to give those animals food and drink.'

It was necessary to use the pantry, where all the fine porcelain was kept, as a room for questioning the prisoners because it has barred windows. They take those who seem the least stupid to extort information.

'Captain Altmayer, of the G.C.G., says that the Boche officers appear very uneasy about the result of the battle,' Commandant Sainte-Péreuse reports to me while I go up with him to our attic observatory.

The late afternoon is a little misty... the explosions diminish in frequency, the fireworks die down. M. de Sainte-Péreuse's impression is that the front around us is being stabilized; that I can remain without risk of any more than a few scattering shells.

We go down again... things don't seem to be going so well. The offensive must be tied up according to the expressions on the faces of the orderlies, from which one learns a great deal when the officers refuse to give information.

In the evening we are unable to learn the names of the villages we captured or the positions occupied. An orderly arrives and says to me: 'Madame la Marquise, it is I who am to have the pleasure of serving you. I have been placed at your disposal. I shall bring your meals to the small dining-room whenever it is agreeable to you. The same menu that the officers have. This evening we have bean soup, rabbit sauté, peas, salad, cheese, and preserves. Madame will have the nice bits. I must tell madame that in civil life I am a butler. I had a place with madame's own family, with Madame la Comtesse Armand de Foucault, the mother of Colonel Louis, the military attaché, and also at Madame la Comtesse de Favigny's and at Madame la Vicomtesse de Bondy's.'

'All relatives of mine... a family party, so to speak.'

The good fellow gave me, indeed, all possible attention.

At nightfall the last airship drops its message. Talked with one of the officers of the G.C.G., who, having nothing to do, was throwing grain to the pigeons. He tells me that so many messages came to-day by wireless that they haven't had time to decode them all.

Resumption of the artillery fire, but it is ours that is at work, the officer assures me. The enemy batteries are said to have withdrawn to their second position.

Ran across Commandant Sainte-Péreuse. It seems that the thirty civilians living at Pronleroy are out of bread.

The bakers of La Neuville, who are also the ones who supply Pronleroy, have fled. The army will supply them. He also informs me that by a new decision, whether because of bombardments or because of the necessities of this war of movement, all civilians may be evacuated at any moment with a bag small enough to hold on one's knees as the only luggage allowed. He urges me to collect in a camion the toilet articles and clothes which can be taken away hurriedly at night. I go up to pack the little valise, which for six weeks will be always ready in the corner of my bedroom.

On arriving at my door, I meet a colonel who is wandering about the corridors cursing and absolutely determined to enter this locked room, thinking that it is his bedroom.

'Infernal corridor... why on earth need there be so many doors, good and bad! I would like to go to bed. I've got to be up at two.' I point out to him his room, and then a captain of the G.C.G. comes to ask me for covers to place on the divan in the library. The mattress on the billiard-table has been restored to its lawful owners at Montiers. I get him a pillow, too, because the divan cushions are being used. We talk.

'Ah,' he said to me, 'what a relief to-night! Yesterday was a horrible day — such anxiety! To hurl all these men into battle in broad daylight without artillery preparation, without knowing whether we could pierce the German lines ... a great shell fell just at the moment we were sitting down to dinner... our dinner, for Mangin ate about three o'clock in the morning, if you can believe it... officers politely waiting for him — but hungry.'

Passing the great hall, which is brightly lighted, I see a score of officers and generals leaning over a map. I distinguish one tall figure, slightly thick-set, with a clean-cut profile... and very characteristic lower jaw, where all his energy seems to be gathered.

'Yes, that is Mangin,' some one told me. And that is all

that the mistress of the house on that day of battle saw of the conqueror.

June 12

A rather peaceful night... an excursion of Boche airships, bombs... we are accustomed to that.

'Tac-tac...' at my door; it is the orderly who tells me that the tray with my *café au lait* is waiting in the hall on the little table, put there for that purpose.

In the courtyard I meet Captain d'Andurain, and then M. Rochebouet, who accosts me thus: 'Do you know that yesterday there were eight generals at once in your salon? — Pétain, Fayolle, Humbert, those of the Colonial tank army, of the air force... the whole orchestra.'

'An historic day... and we don't know what it's about till afterwards, since you never tell women anything.'

'We don't need to... they guess,' adds d'Andurain.

'But they are allowed to see nothing.'

'Ah, but you've seen a good many things...'

'There were also civilians, three deputies, of whom Galli was one. They are dying of hunger... they have gone to the Dupérour's... she has nothing to give them to eat... the staff have swept away everything.'

They tell me of the accident to the little Legrand girl: some people who were racing over the roads with their cattle, in spite of the prohibition... the child side-swiped by a motor, her thigh broken. They have taken her to the hospital at Ravenel.

Met the mayor, standing beside a regimental wagon presiding over the distribution of loaves of bread for the civilians. There will be three hundred grammes of bread per person without distinction of age or sex. They will be cut and delivered at Madame Dupérour's.

Met two male nurses who were coming down the avenue cursing and swearing.

'They don't know anything in the army corps! Ravenel or Canly — just go there and see; they don't give me my anti-tetanus serum and my patients waiting for it. I am going to Ravenel first...!' And the two nurses went on in a furniture van drawn by a half-starved nag.

Around the château the news dispatches are posted, in *communiqués* which are changed from hour to hour. Belloy is retaken; Lataule also. The château was entirely burned.

The officers talk among themselves. The regiment, which on Sunday flinched, seized with panic, abandoning munitions, supplies, and reserve positions... nobody could explain it. Maddened by the gas — a new poison... The chasseurs were there... there is talk of treachery. It was then that Moyenneville began to burn and then that the staff made preparations to leave Montiers. There had been enemy infiltrations at Wacquemoulin, four kilometres from Pronleroy.

The colonel's orderly, who is quartered at the mayor's house, told Madame Tonnelier we had gained four kilometres yesterday along the whole front.

M. d'Andurain sends to ask for my horse to go for reserve provisions to Montiers. After breakfast, a second visit from M. d'Andurain. This time he asks for the keys to the closed apartments in the right wing to put up there the Marquis de Brémont d'Ars, and a number of very distinguished officers who are now sleeping in the attic... these unfurnished rooms will fill them with joy.

Every day M. d'Andurain or a colonel calls on me for more apartments, all the while protesting that there is no need of settling down when they are on the point of going.

Some airships bring messages, but our artillery has almost stopped firing. We don't follow up the offensive and seem to suspect a little deception.

The cooks of the Second Chasseurs have received orders to leave this evening; the battalion is going on beyond

Compiègne, a region where the German advance is still going on. A commandant of gendarmerie comes out of the salon... he is from Périgord, the cradle of my family, and comes to speak to me about the Foucaults of Lardimalie, the branch of the family that lives in Bergeraçois; he calls me 'Madame la Marquise' a little too much, and his real purpose was to get sheets and blankets, which I send to him by one of the men from the provost's office.

I go down to the village... a formidable rumbling... what can that be? It is the return of the wounded tanks from the battlefield. Ah! Such a moving spectacle! The one at the head of the line is the only one that comes back under its own power, but with what gaping wounds in its flank and its turret! It tows another along with a cable, and behind are two more drawn by camions, which guide them while the great caterpillar-belts grip the ground like the crushing paws of a mastodon, and there is a great smoking and clashing and going forward and rolling back like Apocalyptic beasts out of breath.

The officers and mechanics follow at a slow pace, clothed in rags, their faces mottled with soot and dust; and before me passes the little captain of the rose, once so dandified, now as filthy and exhausted as the rest, but still with a flower at the corner of his lips. He recognizes me, makes me an elaborate bow, and disappears with his walk of a black Pierrot, so moving because of his extreme youth and because of that savage determination which shines in his eyes. To see him living, without a scratch, causes me an emotional delight, the blossoming of that sudden sympathy born on the eve of battle. Before disappearing at the corner of the church, he spoke to the officers of the staff. I promised myself to find out his name, which I had not learned.¹

¹ I learned later at the celebration on June 30, 1929, that he was the Vicomte Antoine de Gasseral, and that the roses picked at the château had been sent in a letter to his cousin, Yolande de Pronleroy.

I go along beside these creeping tanks. They return to the grass plot underneath the lindens in the park, where formerly the lords of Landry danced with the fair maids of Pronleroy; the old trees hid from inquisitive glances the saraband of the wounded monsters.

I spoke to the sergeant.

'You belong to the tank?'

'Yes, madame.'

'Is Lieutenant du Halgouet in your company?'

'He has been wounded.'

'He is distantly connected with my family. I should like to send news of him to his young wife.'

'I don't know — you must see the commandant... Commandant, there is a lady asking after Lieutenant du Halgouet.'

The officer approaches, round, dark, very amiable. I give my name.

'Du Halgouet?... yes, he has been wounded and has covered himself with glory. He has been suggested for the Cross of the Legion of Honor. Over there is a man who fought beside him.'

'Is du Halgouet badly wounded?'

'No; he was wounded in the elbow and went on fighting... he is magnificent under fire.'

'Commandant, would your officers like it if I sent them a few bottles of Anjou?'

'Assuredly; they would be more than pleased! Oh, what a day, my poor tanks! Out of twelve, I bring back only four, and in what a state! The others were hit by bombs and took fire.'

'And those who manned them?'

'Wounded, burned — relatively few deaths; but so many men put *hors de combat*. I say there, send a man with a basket with madame, who wishes to send us some wine.'

I wait, but no one comes... then I go out of the wood

on tiptoe. I hear some one running behind me — it is a soldier with his arms in his shirt, and his chest bare.

‘Can’t you go into your own house without having a soldier along?’ says he, greatly surprised.

‘Yes; I can go about alone. I want you to bring back some wine to the officers.’

The gendarme at the gate gives me the military salute — all the sentries and orderlies always salute me. He eyes this soldier in *négligée* with a scornful air.

‘Pass, madame. What do *you* want around here, you Ostrogoth?’

I answer quickly: ‘This soldier is going with me to carry back some wine.’

‘Well, that’s a hell of a costume to walk with Madame la Marquise in. *Mon vieux*, you had better get out of sight... hide yourself behind the wall... here comes the provost commandant... he doesn’t joke about clothes.’

I take my soldier and give him a glass of drink to console him for his embarrassment and fill his arms with bottles, since he has no basket.

Some one calls me... there is still another column of prisoners coming up. D’Andurain wants to show me some officers passing by, wearing extraordinary helmets covered with a network frame through which handfuls of grass are stuck... these bunches of vegetation blend with the tall meadow-grass, and make their passage almost invisible if they are crawling.

June 13

A peaceful night and a lovely morning. I hear mowing under my windows. I look out. A party of three Boche prisoners are handling scythes awkwardly, guarded by a sentry with loaded musket. Another squad of prisoners arrives under the guidance of other sentries. The staff has decided that my hay could be made by forced labor, it being necessary for the cavalry to find forage when they pass.

After luncheon, I meet Captain Rochebouet in the courtyard.

'Madame, we are going. General Mangin wishes to know if you can receive a visit from him to thank you for your hospitality.'

'I should be only too happy... but where can I receive him?... I have only my own room.'

'In the library... they will place it at your disposal again.'

'Splendid, and when?'

'Now, as soon as luncheon is over... And you, madame, what is going to become of you?'

'I am going to stay here, of course.'

'But, madame, it would be wise to consider.'

'Wisdom is not my forte, and then I assure you that I have considered carefully all the possibilities, made my will, and put my children in safety. My life is too bound up with this place. My presence is necessary; until the military authorities order me into a camion, I shall remain.'

'In that case you will go away with empty hands without saving anything.'

'What can I do? I haven't even been able to send a little furniture away from Beauvais. I can't move my whole estate... besides, this house is a unit, an *ensemble*... I want to save all or nothing.'

'If the staff goes, will you stay on all alone?'

'They'll leave a billeting officer, perhaps... and other troops will come.'

'You do not understand, madame, the dangers of a war of movement. There are advances and retreats... you may be under shell-fire... hear how loud they are to-day... you realize, of course, that all the commandants' posts are set up on the other side of your woods, that in the fields there are trenches and barbed wire in place. At the least backward movement on our part, Pronleroy becomes an abandoned zone — the No-Man's Land played over by both artilleries.'

‘As at Le Plessier de Roye... I am ready for everything. Besides, there are lives in which the zest of living has become a very relative matter.’

‘People say that, madame.’

‘No, no, one feels it. On the 22d of March, we were on a bombarded front, and you know how extensive the breach was! We were within one kilometre of an advancing army which had made an advance of eighteen kilometres the day before. We were informed that the Boches would enter the following night... shells were raining down... and then the cavalry of my cousin de Rascas threw themselves into the turmoil, and gave the reserves time to come up. I had no desire to go *then* — I shall not go this time either.’

‘So much the worse. I have done what I could — my general will say whatever remains to be said. He is an adventurous spirit... the risk doesn’t count for him either.’

General Mangin offers me his hand with absolute simplicity... he thanks me with beautiful courtesy for the room I have given him, tells me how much he has enjoyed the view of the old tower of Cressonsacq and the distant blues of the forest of Compiègne. I assure him that it has been the greatest of honors for Pronleroy, and that his presence alone has saved us.

‘There was a great effort to be made. Now the front is unbroken around you. I asked much... the burst of energy that answered was admirable. Now I am going between the Oise and the Aisne to give another sector a little air.’

We talked about the Colonies and about Morocco. He asks about Father Foucault.

‘Yes, a relative of whom I am proud, very representative of my race.’

‘Such energy! I have never known him, but I have run into his work at every step; his book was a breviary to me. What he has done to aid the French occupation of the South, only the Colonials know.’

The general fastened his clear steel-gray eyes upon me, stern eyes but very piercing, the eyes of a leader. What emanates from him is a sense of power, of well-balanced force, capable of harshness when it is necessary... a warrior who will consent to the costly sacrifice of a bloody offensive to save what must be saved above all else: the cradle of our Capetian royalty — the Île de France, the heart of our country.

‘You have not left your home during the war?’ continued the general.

‘Not at all. In 1914, I saw the Boches pass... they spent twenty days between us and Paris. We have been always miraculously preserved.’

The general smiled.

‘You, madame, must think but little of retreat or flight.’

And his eagle’s glance was touched with a very strange gentleness as it rested upon a woman’s face, or on the books which he went over to and stroked.

‘You have some beautiful bindings, a perfectly chosen library, which I wish I could have lingered with. I cannot tell you, madame, the joy I feel in finding my way into a house during war-time where *life goes on*... in fighting for people who are faithful to their posts, instead of for ruins and fugitives. Thanks to your presence, the war has only grazed this beautiful corner of France. There are doors, windows, chairs with all four legs in the salons, a table that stands up straight in the dining-room... and books, hundreds of books.’ The general adds with emotion: ‘And then, the hostess offers you a room with all its furniture intact. Over one piece a pretty virgin of the eighteenth century, surrounded by vases of flowers... the chamber that a young girl has just left... and all this is already a part of the Past... but of a Past which will leave Pronleroy one of my most vivid memories of the campaign.’

‘Well, General Mangin, all I can say is, in the words of



GENERAL MANGIN

June, 1918

the old traditional farewell, "May God keep you! For us and for France!"

June 14

In the direction of Cressonsacq there is a great gun firing toward Estrées. The reports are deafening: from the courtyard we can hardly hear ourselves speak, from my room they are intolerable.

June 15

At five o'clock, a blast on the bugle, a loud alarm... battle with a German squadron which two groups of airships are chasing... deafening barrage fire, much shrapnel in the air. By the time I got up to the attic, there was nothing left in the sky but black points running away.

The courtyard is full of soldiers... all the officers turned out at the noise of the battle. I join the general and thank him for his invitation for luncheon to-morrow.

In the evening I turn out two little secretaries that had installed themselves in one of the rooms in the attic, where they are making a hellish noise above my room. I send them to a room that corresponds to mine, but which is above the general's; he'll find a way to shut them up.

Between ten o'clock and midnight, a raid of considerable violence, explosions near at hand.

June 16

Constantine, bringing in my coffee, informs me that several bombs fell at one end of the garden... others on the machine-gun posts at the beginning of the road to Noroy; several wounded there.

Take off the furniture covers in the dining-room; a gala table with baskets of flowers was already set. Military Mass at eight-thirty, with few people; excellent music;

a very spiritual, very philosophic sermon on the Sacred Heart. Complimented the organist and offered my services to the chaplain. On returning from church, I meet M. d'Andurain, who was looking for me.

'We must prepare the cellars in case of a raid. Have they two exits?'

'Oh, we always escape... yes, there is one outer door and one leading to the interior of the château.'

'Excellent! We must reckon with human nerves... People are afraid. You know it doesn't make any difference wearing these'... he touches his stripes with his finger... 'they don't give you a warlike soul... and then for us there is the responsibility. Every one, madame, hasn't a character like yours... some would have died of fright last night.'

We go down to look at the cellars.

'They are vaulted and solid... sufficient to reassure all the tremblers. We'll disinfect them and clean them (they smell of the Boche); in case of alarm, the bugles will blow. You too, madame, will do better to go down; the first room will be the place of shelter for the officers. We'll put up signs to show the entrances.'

At eleven-thirty, M. d'Andurain comes to my room to fetch me for luncheon. I find the general on the terrace. We shake hands and pass into the dining-room. I am at the center of the table, facing the general, the basket of flowers and a tin box with a slit in the cover — a box for fines: whenever any one speaks about the war, a subject forbidden at the table, he puts two sous in the box. This contribution ensures funds for the purchase of a bottle or two of good wine, oysters, and other delicacies. The general eats milk foods and purées and drinks peppermint tea; he was caught by the gas at Verdun and suffered cruelly.

They talk of a marriage celebrated in the dining-room of the camp at Montiers just at the mail hour, with three

secretaries awaiting the signatures, General Jacquot and Colonel Loiseau being the witnesses. 'They seemed a little short of women,' adds M. d'Andurain.

After the coffee, cameras come out and we have our pictures taken on the terrace — the general, myself, Colonel Loiseau, the Commandant de Sainte-Péreuse. I feel that every one is in a hurry; the officers go down to their offices, the general goes to his room to read Tacitus and Horace.

The Boche working party turns over the hay on the field, where it dries marvelously.

After Vespers, I go with M. Tonnelier to see the holes made by the bombs last night. Not very horrible — these holes; the explosion flattened out the grain roundabout and sent lumps of earth through the colonel's windows in his quarters at the Tonneliers'.

Receive a visit from the curé's sister, who has come to return a book; she still thinks that Pronleroy will be evacuated to-morrow.

'But the staff assures me that we will run no more risks except from the aerial bombardments.'

'Oh, that's what the officers say...'

One feels in Mademoiselle Vignette that plebeian hatred for the military caste which is so hard for people like me to realize.

Great activity of aviators at twilight. All the batteries at work with a deafening hullabaloo.

In the evening I am dead with sleep, and drop off without paying any attention to the usual air raid.

June 17

On going out to the terrace, I see an immense glow in the sky above Cressonsacq. An artillery officer comes running up and stops the commissary officer. 'They have just burned up the fourth "sausage" since yesterday.'

Captain Guillaumat is beside himself, and rushes out of the office.

'It's my brother's balloon that has just come down in flames! My brother is killed!'

'But no,' the artillery captain assures him. 'The flyer had time to jump in a parachute.'

'The Boches have been preparing something for us... we must keep our eyes open,' says the commissary officer philosophically.

'Yes; all these demonstrations in the air, these heavy detonations, coming from a distance... all this indicates a resumption of activity in our direction.'

On my way back, I meet Captain Guillaumat with whom was a man whose head was done up in a blood-stained bandage.

I ask: 'Was it you that was wounded yesterday by the bombs?'

'No; I was brought down this morning.'

'It is my brother whom I have the honor to present to you,' says the captain.

I shake his hand and compliment him on his escape. The wounded man gesticulates, very excited and red in the face, feverish; one could see the swelling of his eye under the bandage.

'I jumped at four hundred metres with my balloon in flames... the wind threw me into a ravine... except for the thick grass, I should have been killed; I was rolled over and hit hard.'

'You were wounded in the temple?'

'Principally in the eye. Ah, those pigs, they keep coming back to bother us; I thought that one of their beastly bullets would go right into me. Oh, I was protected by the machine-gun men, who distinguished themselves... they were magnificent... our good fellows in the park pulled me out right away, without paying any attention to the

“plums” that might have riddled them. I was at twelve hundred metres when the Boche came down on me again. My chief, Lieutenant Jacquemin, who is a very decent fellow, sent the officer in charge of the motors to me. “Go and reassure your brother at Pronleroy. He saw you fall; he must think you’re dead.”

The captain would like to give his brother his room, to keep him at the château.

‘No; I am lodged with a civilian at Ravenel, and I am very comfortable. I’ve got to take the motor back, and there are my dressings to be attended to; in fact, I am very content, for I learned a very important thing about Boulogne-la-Grasse, and it was I who passed it along.’

‘Come and rest; you can talk afterwards.’

‘No, I must get back. I have my priority because I signaled the movement. The Boches were furious when I surprised that; that is why they fell upon me like gad-flies.’

At five o’clock I take a walk with the mayor, who takes Madame Dupéroux, Julie, and Rachel to see the marks of the bombardment of last night. The artillery of the Thirty-Fifth Corps is encamped in open thickets and has suffered much damage. Eight hundred holes for individual shelters have been dug, to say nothing of trenches. M. Tonnelier picks up a cartridge of a ‘seventy-five.’ Madame Dupéroux plucks flowers.

We reach the spot that was bombarded... craters two metres in depth by three or four in circumference... huge blocks of clay, pressed together, transformed into rocky masses, have been thrown forty or fifty metres... five craters in a row in the thickets started fires around the holes, but by an incredible miracle nobody was hurt.

June 18

Talked with Commandant de Sainte-Péreuse about my fire insurance with Le Mans Insurance Company, the re-

ceipt of the premium for which has not reached me. He gives me a claim blank.

'Is there any way of insuring against the risk of bombardment?'

'No; not for châteaux in the zone at the front. It is impossible.'

We consider the possibility of moving my furniture. Sainte-Péreuse goes to ask for information from Commandant Pallain, his friend, who is in charge of the evacuation of *objets d'art* in the district.

'For, after all,' says the commandant, 'the front may at any time be broken through or movements be undertaken which will compel falling back; so begin the preparations.'

I have chests brought to the music-room and take basket-fuls of my best books out of the billiard-room. I meet one of the staff captains and he insists on carrying the heavy baskets; in my trips to the billiard-room, I almost run into a starred officer—it is General Humbert, amazingly youthful in appearance. He greets me with the greatest courtesy. General Jacquot comes down the stairs hurrying to join him in the salon. He says to me as he passes, 'You are quite right to send your books to the rear.'

In the afternoon I pack two trunks of sheets and bedding. M. d'Andurain is surprised at my packages, but I have no time to talk to him.

I have been to the mayor's; my correspondence from Le Mans has been sent to Beauvais; it is simply a question of getting it from there. A postal service on bicycles is to be organized from our chief town.

Return to the château with Commandant Miquel. We watch a battalion of foot chasseurs pass; it is going up to the front. The commandant has been by motor to-day to Coivrel, Saint-Martin, and Ravenel... there is an incessant movement of troops there along the firing line... his secretary, who has a room at Madame Tonnelier's, assures us

that the Boches are clearing out of our district to fall upon Compiègne.

The *Écho de Paris* this morning speaks of the 'flank attack of General Mangin, a determined movement directed from Pronleroy.'

The article, which is headed Pronleroy, must have been written by a reporter who has been chattering with the orderlies; he adds:

'On the 10th, Compiègne, the strategic goal of the German offensive, was about to be attacked; the Germans were setting about this when on the 11th the shattering charge of General Mangin took prisoner a whole regiment supplied with picks and spades, who were preparing the exit from the trenches for a second attack fixed for two o'clock. Mangin's sudden advance without artillery preparation overwhelmed with surprise a whole army in preparation for an offensive. Alsatians who had come over to our lines had given very valuable information.'

On our return we watch the young officers of the staff... they leap over the piles of hay, roll excitedly in the grass, and amuse themselves like children, d'Andurain at their head. I pluck roses for my bouquets and they come to ask me for a few to decorate the winner of the games.

June 21

At five o'clock, when I am in the middle of carrying books and glassware, Constantine comes to tell me a general is asking for me. I hesitate about seeing him. Marcel comes to say that the general insists. Constantine goes to open the library for me. I run to wash my hands and have Marcel give me a vigorous brushing. I cross the porch and find, on the landing of the stairs on the right, a very young and charming officer. He introduces himself:

'General Rampon — I am sent to you, madame, by one of your friends whom I talked with a few days ago —

Commandant de Froidefond, who is very anxious about your fate, and the fate of the château, in the fracas of the 9th of June. He urged me to come to see you if I were near by. I had come to the army corps on a matter of business, when d'Andurain mentioned your name. I cried out: "Surely, the Marquise is not here in this mob of soldiers!" He replied, "Why, yes"... and here I am.'

'Delighted to receive you, General Rampon.'

I ask anxiously about the strength of the front.

'MM. de Sainte-Péreuse and d'Andurain consider that there are eight chances in ten that the "superstructure," as they say in the staff, of the château will be destroyed.'

'No; I believe that you are relatively safe — the front will not break. I confess to you that I was extremely curious to know the woman who had remained in Pronleroy since the 31st of March. Now I understand very well the type of French woman that you are — one of those for whom men fight.'

The general promises to come to tea on Sunday; he kisses my hand on the porch with such chivalric deference that this friendly call of a general on the lady of the house makes all the trivial affairs of staff captains and lieutenants and staff seem much more important.

June 22

Conferred with M. d'Andurain about where I should take my furniture. He gives me a pass for La Neuville, so I can talk with the Barriers who have rented a warehouse at Valdampierre and who might, perhaps, get one for me.

Mail arrives for the first time since the 7th of June. Several letters from my daughters. Simone tells me the story of her odyssey after Beauvais... her going to and fro in the American vans, her arrival in Gisors at our cousins', the O'Diettes, how, when a freight-car was all loaded with the furniture, there was an order to unhitch it, and, the last

evacuation train having left, to throw everything in it out on the track. At the instance of Madame O'Diette, the station-agent consented to attach the car to a train about to start. Simone describes her arrival at the Coutades' in Angers, in a house full of refugees coming from all the bombarded regions.

June 23

I go to the Military Mass... fairly good congregation... very excellent music, chants. Met Captain d'Andurain, who tells me that my invitation to tea is enthusiastically accepted by the staff. They will give the dining-room to me for the afternoon. I prepare baskets of roses, a pretty service of Sèvres porcelain. Madame Dupérroux, being requisitioned, makes cakes and tarts. They have put flowers in the billiard-room, where the guests are to gather. I don my black taffeta dress, for I have again become wholly a lady.

The head of the staff introduces to me some officers whom I had not yet met, and Captain Coutan offers me cigarettes — excellent English ones. We go to the billiard-room... we talk of my moving. I hesitate to take away my bedroom furniture, especially the excellent pier glass set in the wall. M. d'Andurain comes to notify me that a telephone call has announced that to-morrow they will give me the big camion... it's the only day I can have it. It will arrive to-morrow at six o'clock for the things which I am getting ready. They will let me have Eddy, the upholsterer, and as many orderlies as I may need.

I pass my evening stuffing the drawers of my commode and the inside of the secretary with small articles. I have eight chests of books, six of porcelain and glassware, eight baskets and parcels of linen, and several trunks of clothing. It is eleven o'clock when I go to bed, very tired by my day's work.

Alarm bells... roaring of airplanes flying above. Bombs fall with the sharp crash which indicates close proximity... the bursts of the shells are terrifying.

I go downstairs to join the officers in their shelter with my flashlight in my hand, the beam of which I conceal as best I can.

'Light... put it out quickly!' says a furious voice in the courtyard.

The panels of the cellar door are closed and a lieutenant with a blue-colored light comes to guide me. Many people in this first cellar... they offer me a chair, and, except for the darkness, it is very much a drawing-room. The raid is a severe one, and every one has rushed down in apparel more or less correct. One very young, very smart lieutenant is pitilessly razzed by his comrades; in his haste, he has forgotten his trousers, and is modestly clad in drawers, silk socks, and a raincoat. The raid at an end, the brilliant gleam of the electric lights reveals this unexpected attire.

June 24

I rise at six o'clock in the morning to finish my packing. Ready before all the other workmen. Eddy and the orderlies arrive and collect and load the furniture. The officers look on through the windows of the salon. D'Andurain hands me a special permit which enables me to ride on a military camion beside the driver. At nine-thirty, the camion starts; Eddy, who has obtained permission to accompany the furniture, climbs on the running-board. We go on, but not for long. At the corner by the church the gendarmes make difficulties, and we stop indefinitely. The men take advantage of the delay and go to eat; the non-com., who is head of the convoy, intervenes, loses his patience, storms; the men return. Germain Barrier, who has come from La Neuville, asks how they are going to take him. They seat him on a bag in the rear of the camion. At nine-thirty we get

under way for good. Pass Cressonsacq. The road is camouflaged not only at the sides, but four metres high by strips of painted canvas stretched between posts every ten metres. I ask what is the use of this camouflage. It is for the benefit of German observation balloons; it decreases the visibility of the road.

It is a cool day and the sun is bright, the drive is delightful; the camion goes slowly and does not jounce too much, being well loaded. We go around Bresle, through which the military authorities have forbidden passage. We find ourselves in a narrow road which ends in a field, and have to retrace our steps. At Noailles we pass the general staff headquarters... the valley opens, superb, all bluish in the distance. After three hours' travel we enter Valdampierre. Germain gets down from the camion so covered with yellow dust that the people ask if he has had a fall on the road.

I breakfast on two eggs, a little stew, some water, and a cup of coffee; then I go into the village in search of Germain, to find out where to put the window-frames that he has brought from La Neuville. Great excitement in the village... children surround my van as it is unloaded... men and women stop. The rural guard assures me that the workmen's quarter, the destruction in which has been caused by the striking button-makers of Méry, is situated in a bad part of the city. He takes my name. Am I, or am I not a refugee? That is to say, do I live there? The unloading goes very slowly because of the narrowness of the stairway. There are two rooms downstairs and three up. Germain cannot put in place the window-frames which he has brought on a wheelbarrow; they are too big, he goes away again, and will try to find some boards.

The work goes too slowly... the chief driver wishes to go back... it is all the same to him whether the furniture is unloaded or not; just leave it in the garden, he says. Eddy rebels. He will not go until the furniture is in place

as Captain d'Andurain ordered him; the staff, foreseeing complications, doesn't expect us before midnight. Eddy storms, gets his soldiers together, arranges the furniture carefully, and pitches into Germain, who says he can't find any boards large enough to cover the doors and windows.

Eddy undertakes everything, in fact; he conducts to the gendarmerie 'the lady sent by a division staff officer,' to have police protection provided for the place where her furniture is stored; goes to find the billeting officer, to be sure that they don't quarter any troops in the storehouse; is general representative of the staff, in short.

He comes back with his soldiers bending under a load of frames of army beds. These they use to cover the windows, nailing them across the openings and making them fast with barbed wire. He places the packing canvas behind these barriers to keep the furniture from being soiled by water in case of rain.

The chauffeurs of the camion get busy and the camion is emptied. Except for the great dish of Italian faïence, which was thrown to the ground with a bale of hay and was broken in pieces, there is not much damage.

The men want a drink, and urge me to go and have some refreshment. I give them some money, for which they thank me warmly. Eddy displays the gayety and drollery of a Parisian workman.

I nibble a bit of chocolate and a biscuit. The night has fallen... we move out quickly — what there is left of us shaking about in that empty camion... Bresle... we make them reopen the military coöperative, which they have just closed, and wait for the parcels ordered by the staff. The soldiers buy wine, preserves, and perfumery. All the stuff the price of which the man at the front has to share with his comrades when he goes to the rear. After Bresle the camion goes by way of Lieuvillers, taking short cuts. At

Argenlieu there is a great collection of motors, of reserve troops going up to the front. At Lieuvillers we see, hidden under piles of wood, quantities of small American cars; also cars full of wounded, driven by Americans.

At last we come to Pronleroy. A convoy bars the way... a sick soldier comes out of a camion, and crumples up in front of Drouin's house. The chief of the convoy stops the cars and rushes to find a surgeon. The camion goes on to the château. Constantine brings me my dinner about ten o'clock. He informs me that his mother-in-law lives in Valdampierre and his aunt keeps an inn there. If we had known this sooner, it might have made many things easier.

June 26

I start again for Valdampierre with my keeper Aristide to see if the furniture is safe.

M. d'Andurain sends me passports and offers me one of the staff motors to take me as far as Clermont. Commandant Miquel struts about in his finest uniform. He is very proud of his son in the dragoons, promoted to second lieutenant at nineteen. I wait an hour for the train to Beauvais in the Clermont Station, which is filled with soldiers, tired and grumbling after five days on the road. At Beauvais the city is full of Americans in striking uniforms and of very alluring young ladies.

Breakfast at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, which has opened its entertainment hall. Pretty pseudo-Chinese and Empire decorations, all of a most harmonious Pompeian red shade. A hundred people are jostling about at the tables. Civilians without bread cards are pitilessly refused when they ask for bread and butter. A soldier takes pity on an old gentleman and gives him a slice of his bread. A two hours' wait at Méry as the train from Abbeville is delayed. At Méry, I learned that the omnibus that runs to Valdampierre has left an hour ago. I go into the church, while waiting for

dinner hour. A few interesting details... beautiful decoration on a tomb, and pretty bits of sculpture as in almost all the old churches of the Île de France.

A rather poor meal with two little flappers who are eating with non-coms., playing at being ladies and making a great display in my honor. A very nice-looking officer and his wife at a small table. A young, very stylish lady, wife or friend, who waits opposite an empty place.

At the door of the large café aviators come and go. They have a camp near by.

Menu: Sorrel soup, eels and ray with black sauce; cauliflower maître d'hôtel; filet de porc with Madeira sauce, very good strawberries and cream.

My window on a very low first floor is just on the level with the seats of the drivers of convoys. Long processions of artillery... soldiers shout *Bonsoir* to me very familiarly. All night the noise of the passing continues under my window.

June 28

I get back to Pronleroy about ten o'clock, overjoyed to find myself in the solitude of my bedroom; my furniture is represented by two mattresses on the floor and two chairs with cloth seats... luckily, I have plenty of boxes.

June 29

The officers are buried in gloom... there are things that they don't talk about. Eddy assures me that the staff will not be there much longer; preparations for leaving have begun, and the staff will make a stop at Noroy and will then proceed in the direction of Beauvais. Constantine also thinks that they are about to leave.

I have no visits except from M. de Sainte-Péreuse on his return from leave. He brings me a new lieutenant of the staff. We talk of Spain and of traveling.

Sainte-Péreuse says to me at last: 'You must really

consider, madame, the possibility of having to leave. If we fall back — and a backward movement is contemplated at the slightest attack on our flanks — you won't be able to stay.'

Sunday morning, July 7

I get ready slowly to go to morning Mass.

The sound of an airship in the sky. At this hour perhaps it is only one of our squadrons.

Uproar in the château... alarm bells ringing... shouts:

'Not a man in the courtyard... barrage fire beginning!'

The roaring then seems to slow up and to be coming down upon us. Suddenly a sharp crackling on the roofs and against the blinds... Tac! tac! tac! Strange, hail from a clear sky! I go to my window and open my blinds — I see nothing.

D'Andurain, who also was watching behind his shutters, calls out:

'For Heaven's sake, don't lean out your window; those cursed Boches are firing at us with machine guns. They are flying low enough to touch the roofs.'

'How many are there?'

'Three; and not one of our machines in the air to drive them away. Ah, they are well informed — they know that on Sunday our aviators are on leave in Paris!'

'Do you suppose they mean to drop bombs?'

'No; if they did, they would have done that, already. It's an observation squad... they are photographing us for the benefit of their long-range guns. At this low altitude, all the details of our central telephone plant will appear on their plates.'

At two o'clock, the organist arrives with two soldier-musicians and boxes of tools; they take down certain parts of the instrument, make a case for what is called the 'chest' of the organ.

At three o'clock two officers appear in a motor... Lieutenant Bellet and another younger man; very agreeable; they ask to see the furniture; the organ, the tables, the eighteenth-century furniture... all these fall into the category of *objets d'art* which it is the army's duty to move. They will give me three camions for the moving.

'Yes, but where shall I move them to? I have been unable to secure any building — Valdampierre is too small; neither the organ nor the *Cadéran* will go into it.'

The younger of the officers says:

'My comrade Bellet has a proposition to make to you, madame; he is going over it with M. de Sainte-Péreuse first.'

Return of the two officers; Sainte-Péreuse says:

'Lieutenant Bellet has an aunt at Saint-Maur les Fossés, twenty kilometres east of Paris — a region not yet bombarded. At his request he thinks that she would take care of your property in a villa which she is not using. He is going to telephone her about it if that is agreeable to you.'

I am grateful, and order some sherry and biscuits, and we have tea.'

Thursday, July 11

A letter from Lieutenant Bellet's aunt, who agrees to take care of my furniture. Feverish packing all the morning.

Half-past two

I knock at M. d'Andurain's door to get the Louis XV furniture, with rose decorations, sure that at that hour he will be at his desk. Not at all... I find him reading a magazine, lolling in an armchair that I want to pack. We back one of the camions round to the front door for the organ. Rageot has brought half the band to help. At five o'clock, when all the furniture is piled up on the steps, there comes a torrential rain and we have to put everything in again.

Eddy superintends. Just at the moment when I am about to swallow a little supper, they call for the pink couch which I thought was in the first wagon. I have to go and get it from the bedroom of a commandant, who lets it go with very ill-grace.

When I return, my roast and my string beans are cold, uneatable... I am too tired to eat anyway. I swallow a biscuit and drink a small glass of black currant wine to set me up.

As soon as the officers have finished their dinner, I look up Captain Grimpart to ask that my camions be put under cover, because there are constant showers. The captain has the staff automobiles moved out and tells them to put my camions in the shed. I give instructions to my keeper, Aristide, in case of evacuation of the château in my absence.

A wild cannonade last night which was very disturbing. I leave in writing a list of furniture to send away in case of need... my dining-room table and the beds. These last articles will be sent to my notary at Lieuvillers, which is much less threatened than Pronleroy. At eleven o'clock I go to my room.

Friday, July 12

I awake at three o'clock, eat a small breakfast, and when Aristide knocks timidly at my door, I reply that I am ready. I put on a fur mantle over my woolen suit... it is a damp, cold morning, but the rain has stopped. The three camions are in the avenue; there is a slight dispute between the drivers, each wishing to have me on his seat. The corporal in a béret, a stout fellow who looks as if he were a Béarnais decides that I shall ride with the non-com. in the third van. I climb onto the running-board and take my seat between the two men. It is impossible for me to find a place for my head and my hat. There is hanging behind me a helmet and a pouch, stuffed full, which take up all the room; the

driver observes my plight and unbuckles the helmet, which they place under my feet. We go by Cressonsacq to Estrées and take the fork through Grandfresnoy, where the men breakfast and get gas.

I see fields of barbed wire; an observation balloon, lost in a little wood, and men making barrages around long objects which are bombs intended to blow up the footways in case of a hostile advance. We have to pass over these open roads, exposed to the shells, before daylight.

We travel quickly... the sun rises in the mist... no wind, and delicious weather. We pass a regiment amid some exclamations from sentries who are not pleased to see a woman on an army camion.

At Grandfresnoy hundreds of camions are drawn up in the park. A few huge artillery tractors, drawn by endless chains like the tanks. We stop at the gate of a farm... the men go to get gas and find out what the orders are... the officer will rejoin us at Saint-Maur. To pass the time, sitting on my high seat, I write in pencil to my daughter. The letter will go from Paris. The men decide to eat, but I am not hungry. Our camion follows the other two, with no idea of what direction we are going... we pass through a town; cross the Oise on a pontoon bridge. It is Pont Sainte-Maxence. We follow a road that mounts interminably through a forest. Fleurines, a small devastated town, houses burned and abandoned, others intact. A suburb of Senlis and we take the wide paved road; we are shaken about as if in a salad basket. What will become of the mirrors and the busts?

A forest... we stop... the men are hungry, and so am I. I ask the lieutenant's orderly if I shall have time to go to the next village to buy some bread and chocolate.

'But we will give you something to eat; we are splendidly supplied with provisions... we have hard-boiled eggs, sardines, and butter.' I accept a sandwich, an egg, and some

very good butter which they take from a large tin box. The men seem stupefied that I have no knife. All of them wish to lend me theirs, and the thing that put the climax on their good-humor is that I ask them for a light for a cigarette.

My driver is a former butcher... the war has cost him the loss of several thousand francs... before the mobilization he drove about in his own automobile... he drives well, and is very courteous and attentive to me... he explains to me that he knows how to get along with the ladies! We start again... the country grows flatter... our second camion has a leak in the gasoline tank. It waters the road and we make signals, but the driver doesn't see. We go at full speed with the regulation twenty metres between us; on a slope which enables us to gain, we shout to the driver the plug of a pipe has blown out. We must stop a moment to find the leak. The first camion, which has seen nothing, continues at full speed and we lose track of it; it alone knows where to go! In a moment or two it makes a half-turn to find out what the matter is.

Here we are in the suburbs of Paris... an aviation camp, the birds lined up before their hangars... fortifications; we make a *détour* by Le Raincy, Vincennes. Our camion stops to set down one of the furniture men who worked for me yesterday; I have given him a day's leave to spend with his family. His little girls, who meet us in the street, jump for joy... he would like to jump from the vehicle before it stops. We leave him in the arms of his wife, who is half-dazed at seeing him.

Joinville, Saint-Maur, the rue du Pont de Créteil. Everybody watches us... the first driver makes a sign to open the doors and the three camions roll into the courtyard. Instead of going to breakfast and resting a little, my soldiers prefer to unload the wagons right away... they begin as I go upstairs to take off my hat in the empty

rooms on the second floor which have been given over to me. They toss the furniture about, unload it every which way, pay no attention to the loading so carefully done by Eddy, and break the foot of a rosewood commode which they are astonished to see come off in their hands.

I speak sharply and tell them that the *pourboires* will be proportioned to the care they take. They grumble, but remove the load with a little more care. Madame Liandier sends her maid to invite me to luncheon, with a finely pleated apron to save my dress. At one o'clock it's all finished. The driver takes me to Madame Liandier's garden, where I find Lieutenant Bellet's orderly. They serve me a luncheon of sausage and eggs and lobster, with a bean salad and excellent peaches, white wine, and exquisite coffee. I am embarrassed at all the trouble that this charming woman takes for me.

July 13

Few decorations in Paris for a 14th of July eve.

Difficulties with gendarmes at the Gare du Nord because my pass is made out for Saint-Maur. I travel with officers and a civilian of Clermont — judge of the tribunal. He has sent his family to Tarbes. All Clermont has fled. His daughters are teasing him to let them return. He will not authorize it until after the launching of the third German offensive which is expected on the 14th.

At Creil a train of wounded is in the station. All the men have been hit in the head. Two compartments of officers, several of them in high good-humor, jumping on one leg to the door to talk to the ladies. A train of troops going up into the line passes us at Clermont. Some Hindu soldiers in turbans get down from the train; there are masses of Italians in the station.

All goes well at Pronleroy. The staff have stopped talking about going away. I have the small dining-room cleared

of all its packing-straw; d'Andurain comes to pay me a visit through the window.

'I am very glad, madame, to see you rested from your labors.'

'Do you want me to look after the change of sheets for your beds?'

'Oh, we will speak about that again in a few days.'

That evening I walk in the park with the officers. One feels that they are nervous... there is something in the air.

Sunday, July 14

Low Mass by the chaplain. At ten o'clock they bring the programme for the music and I send it to the mayor.

'We have a good breakfast,' says Constantine to me. 'Eels with Madeira sauce and mushrooms, veal with sauce mousseline, potatoes sauté, ham à la gelée, *Saint-Honoré au café*.' Half-past twelve: I lean out the window in the corridor and listen to *La Marseillaise*. It is the band marching through the courtyard. I go down as soon as I have put on my hat, adorned with a beautiful bunch of feathers for the occasion. They bring me a chair: I seat myself at the foot of the staircase between two officers. They play all the national airs of the Allies, to which the officers listen to the end, standing at salute. The Italian anthem had just come to an end when two battalions arrive at parade step in gleaming uniforms; they are the Italian workmen, encamped in the neighborhood, who have come with their officers to celebrate with us our national fête. They make a perfect left turn, and draw up in four rows, between the wings of the château. D'Andurain goes to see the officers; five of them come forward, and a surgeon and a chaplain... they have handsome profiles, with antique medals on their parade helmets. The Italians listen to the concert. The chief commissary sees that the officers are offered champagne. They play the Italian anthem again, and follow it

with the royal anthem. At the left, a whole audience of soldiers has gathered together, applauding, and I, too, applaud that royal hymn.

General Jacquot goes up the steps with his officers, the Italian officers come to salute him, and march past with their battalions which render all the honors, going up and down the avenue in fine order. The general salutes with his hand and gets into his automobile. He is going to the trenches to see his *poilus*.

D'Andurain and Sainte-Péreuse receive the Italians in the dining-room. I speak with a young captain, a commission agent in civil life. He says to me:

'Never does a soldier, of whom one asks why he is fighting, answer, "To defend the republic"; "To save democracy"; he invariably answers, "For France."'

I try to make the orderlies talk, but cannot. Eddy says they will be talking in four days. The officers have a pre-occupied air. At five o'clock two Americans arrive, the first who have ever come to the château... they are a doctor and the head of the automobile service.

An evening of floods. Impossible to join the officers, who are walking in groups in the rain, but do not want to talk. I should like, however, to know something.

July 15

The *Écho de Paris* says: 'Never has the cannon been heard in Paris so loud as during the 14th. It is the polite announcement of an offensive.'

Madame Mallard, who is going to Saint-Nazaire with her daughter, comes to bid me good-bye. There is whispering among the sentries... one of them says to me, 'The offensive has begun, but the gentlemen say nothing about it, which means they are upset.' At four-thirty, the *communiqué* is posted up in the staff wings. Several soldiers copy it into their notebooks. I go to read it:

The offensive was started between Reims and Le Main de Massige over a ninety-kilometre front. We are holding our own.

Have a talk with M. d'Andurain, who is very deeply pre-occupied... he passed last night at his office without closing his eyes, so absorbed in his work that he did not hear the formidable boomings that went on during the evening.

'We shall know in eight days. There are necessary backward movements; we have a perfectly secure hold upon Reims. There has been a Boche advance toward the Marne about fifteen kilometres wide and five deep.'

In the evening Captain Coutant says to me: 'The Marne has been crossed in part by the Germans... nothing overwhelming at the moment. A million men are engaged. What slaughter! We shall probably lose Reims. The Americans are in Champagne... we were warned and ready.'

Met Sainte-Péreuse and Captain Grimpart in the park... they are hopeful. It is the last battle; it will not reach Paris unless there is a general backward movement, and we are safe for the moment.

Commandant Miquel and Colonel Loisau say:

'We will celebrate the 14th of July next year in Germany.'

The soldiers are very serious. No artillery activity on our side this evening.

July 17

We had another bombardment last night. Marcel thinks the raid was directed toward Ravenel, Montiers, and L'Églantier. Madame Dupérour heard a telephone conversation from the central artillery station in her house above the shop, to this effect: 'Above all, keep your eyes open about Méry.'

At four o'clock a favorable *communiqué*... the line of battle is firmly anchored in Champagne.

July 18

The servant announces at breakfast:

'We have retaken several places about Soissons.'

Captain d'Andurain comes into the dining-room to bring me two books of memoirs: *La Cour de Lunéville*.

'Our Mangin-Degoutte counter-offensive on the flank of the German offensive is going on magnificently — fifteen thousand prisoners, an enormous amount of *matériel*, three hundred guns taken. If we reach La Fère-en-Tardenois, we can take sixty thousand prisoners and get the two divisions that pushed on so rashly to the mouth of the Marne.'

This is the intoxication of victory!

They admit what they concealed yesterday... the counter-offensive seemed to be stuck... we had even lost ground. To-day we are advancing. The mayor comes to the château to read the news, posted twice a day. This phrase is in the *communiqué* at four o'clock:

We wish to announce that the Germans have recrossed the Marne; our victory is becoming more complete, twenty thousand prisoners since yesterday.

A young secretary has fallen ill... Spanish grippe... forty degrees of fever. They send to ask me for tea and sugar for him. I see to the making of a real bed where he will have a good mattress and good sheets.

July 21

Busy with my little invalid. M. d'Andurain sends to me for books. When I carry them to him we have a talk... a dissertation on the will to win, to go to Berlin, which is seizing the army. The Americans are helping, but it is *we* who have won. We have fooled the Boche by keeping out of sight our great reserve, which we denied we had in order to excuse our two set-backs of March and June.

July 28

This morning, while I was reading the *communiqué*, the cannonading redoubled. A sub-officer, who was also reading it, said to me, 'That's at Ployron. You must have heard last night — the Boches attacked an hour before we were to advance. How could they know of our offensive? At this moment our general is at Clermont. There is a great review there. We are giving him the Commander's scarf.'

August 1

Coming from Vespers I meet artillery going to the front, huge 'hundred and fifties,' very long, drawn by tractors. An accident ties up the road... an *adjutant*, who has come from church, speaks to the soldiers who are fixing a tire. 'On June 10th we were at Ressons, we moved out in a hurry; we were almost the only ones who saved our guns. Just now we are coming down from Montdidier and going to Cernoy.'

A 'seventy-five' passes in the opposite direction toward Saint-Just. The staff has had the order to leave... it is going up beyond Saint-Just to Vavignies. The general is quartered in a small château; the other officers are very uncomfortable, without beds or sheets, in the houses of a wretched village.

Sunday, August 4

Morning Mass, closing the triduum of prayers for victory; many communions.

I have invited the officers to a farewell luncheon. We drink to our success. The dispatches are favorable... great advance along the Aisne and the Vesle.

Great outburst of joy... Soissons is taken, our men are on the route for Fismes, the château of Limet, belonging to Prince Poniatowsky, where the Thirty-Fifth Corps stayed two months, is retaken. Every one is bursting with happiness.

Just as I had finished dressing for dinner, standing by the window, there is a formidable explosion... a crash that shakes all the windows, then a boom-boom comes about every fifteen minutes. I go down to ask questions. It is the heavy battery of the 150th, which has taken a position at the end of my woods and is firing over the château. In the courtyard, they tell me the general is at dinner.

We have a magnificent dinner, the result mostly of fines for being late at meals and talking about the war. It is one of the little jests of the general, which he enjoys, to say, 'You owe a fine of two more sous!' Captain Coutant, who returns from Paris, says the capital is deserted, and you don't see one person on leave. As we finish the soup, the boom-boom begins again and makes the glasses dance. 'They are a bore, our artillerymen,' says the general. 'And it is the departures that make the noise... it must be a nuisance to the Boches to receive them.' He offers me a cigarette, which I smoke with pleasure. We part the best of friends.

The night is agitated with the great guns booming incessantly.

Monday, August 5

They are loading the motors, the camions, the wagons... all the desks and typewriters are put on board. The general, whom I meet at the foot of the staircase, bids me farewell most pleasantly; the captains come to shake hands with me. Three motors are lined up in the courtyard, the others wait under the lindens... every one gets into his car, and the whole procession goes off down the avenue. They leave me Lieutenant Laignier to help me put the château in order. By evening everything is cleaned up and you'd think we would have a moment to breathe. But no, a billeting officer arrives with three wagonloads of packing-cases, and sets up offices: he also wants officers' rooms. A captain arrives,

very courteous. If he comes with troops, it will be our Montier division, and that will leave us very little room.

Thursday, August 8

Eight in the morning... sound of boots in the corridor. It is the staff of the Fifty-Eighth Division of Colonials, General Prioux, for whom a captain and a lieutenant are arranging the quarters... they need room, and more room; this division is more in the way than a whole army corps.

The chief of staff comes in at six o'clock... a slim little Colonial, very discreet and courteous, who does not enter my personal apartments.

Tremendous going to and fro of troops... there is an offensive in the air.

August 9

Heavy bombing last night and some shells fell very near at hand. Seven shells have fallen at the mill; the woman Maartens, who lives in that shack, has had a terrible fright, and with the help of soldiers has taken her six children to the sand pits near by. I go to see the shell-holes... they are enormous.

Officers coming and going. Lieutenant des Bicots asks me for an observatory. I show him the small attic. He goes up there to take views of the part of the sector which interests him particularly.

He asks me: 'Are you related to Père de Foucault?'

'Yes, distantly related. Have you met him in the South?'

'It was I who commanded the *harka* sent out to punish the tribe which had assassinated him.'

He laughed, showing all his white teeth.

'It was I who avenged him. I struck down the man who had stabbed him.'

Four o'clock... boom, boom... tremendous explosions... the officers rush out of their offices.

'The devil... it's the château they're after!'

Heavy pieces — Austrian 'hundred and twenties'... they are playing with us from fifteen kilometres back, at least.

A lieutenant has gone to see where the shells are falling... he returns, running:

'Too short by about a hundred metres.'

Eight bombs along the wall of the park and some unexploded projectiles.

They do not know... I say to myself, aside: Result of the airplane photographs taken on the 7th of July.

Saturday, August 10

Three o'clock in the morning... heavy reverberations... caterwauling, bellowing, and roaring and sharp sounds like trumpet calls... the château trembles and rolls like a vessel. I go up to the window in the attic... the chief of staff and the lieutenant are standing on the edge of the roof with glasses in their hands. We hear shells exploding in the direction of the Thomas farm.

'Nothing to fear,' says the colonel. 'Everything is going well. It's the preliminary fire, the battle of the Aure is about to begin. We are taking the offensive afresh; the airships are waiting for daylight to start.'

The dawn comes, and we see the flashes, the sudden glare from the great guns firing from our wood.

I stay in the attic, leaning out the window. The officers, very serious, exchange a few words.

'It's going all right at the right.'

'At the left there's no reply.'

I go downstairs again and read... with all this racket it is impossible to sleep. Marcel, who is acting as my chambermaid, places a pitcher of hot water at my door; and cries out:

'Victory! Our troops are going forward everywhere... infantry and artillery are going by here all the time.'

A second staff has just arrived, that of the Twentieth

Division, stationed since yesterday at Madame Dupérroux's.

Artillery and ammunition camions pass. A sanitary corps has left all its wheelbarrows in the avenue. A map with the line of advance has been posted near the *communiqué* on the right wing of the château... Ressons, Orvillers, and Rollot are retaken. I go for news... talking to unknown officers, who answer as friends; they congratulate each other and joy sparkles in every eye.

We are advancing... we are advancing! Montdidier is surrounded... the Boches have only a narrow road by which to escape... the prisoners are getting very numerous.

I go to watch the troops pass. Some Alpines are resting, the men exhausted by the crushing heat.

'Yes, they look about done; at rest they feel the fatigue, but in battle they'll buck up,' says a non-com.

I go to give the good news to the mayor, who is ill in bed and hasn't heard anything.

Camions are in the courtyard... they are piling in the desks; the order has gone out... the staff may go in an hour. I catch M. de Kergos and his inseparable Soultrait, who are wandering about under the lindens like lost souls, and ask them what the matter is.

'We are roomless... waiting for the order to go which they don't give us, and yet they have made us move out for the Seventieth Division.'

I take the two officers to the billiard-room and bring something for their luncheon. All the rooms are taken, but the staff has left me this billiard-room and the pink salon beside it, which was M. d'Andurain's room. One divan still remains there. They accept it with gratitude, and with their orderlies, move in another couch, a velvet divan, from the small empty room behind the rose salon. We go on a hunt for mattresses... all this amuses them very much.

After dinner I take a walk with the two officers. General

Prioux ignores me altogether... this is the only body of troops that has had no officer make a courtesy call on me.

Reading of the latest *communiqué*:

The *massif* of Boulogne-la-Grasse is carried; Conchy is taken; we are three kilometres from Roye, two from Chaulne, and have advanced twenty kilometres at certain points; masses of prisoners, of guns; the enemy is offering little resistance.

August 22

Captain d'Andurain arrives on horseback to pay me a very early visit. I take time to do my hair and to dress. I find him seated on the steps talking with Aristide and Marcel.

The staff is at Coivrel, linked with the First Army, Debenay's... we have taken Lassigny without an effort... the British are marching forward *en échelon*. Mangin has struck a very important blow between the Oise and the Aisne, toward Carlepont Ourscamp.

D'Andurain inquires whether the division has made itself too disagreeable... he has heard that they have upset much in the château and that there has been some stealing.

General Jacquot succeeds General Rampon at Coivrel, the latter having just gone... the Boche is outplayed on a large scale, the brightest hopes are justified. D'Andurain asks me if I do not regret having sent my furniture away.

'No; it was too great a risk... the Austrian 'hundred and fifty-fives' fired on us the night before the battle of the Aure... they almost hit us; if the offensive had been forty-eight hours later, they would have.

D'Andurain advises me to get American help for bringing my furniture back from Parc Saint-Maur. He tells me all his friends at Biarritz, who never used to rent their villas, now stay at the hotel and let them out at fabulous prices to homeless manufacturers from the North, who have still kept their enormous fortunes.

Friday, August 23

Seven-thirty... they come to tell me that a lieutenant is looking for me... come to arrange lodgings for a divisional staff. I meet an officer who is a little fat, but a good fellow, with laughing blue eyes, very polite, but with a politeness that is not Parisian... I feel that I have met him somewhere before.

The division will be here for a couple of days; a temporary stop, so they won't put in electricity or telephones, but will simply hook up with the central office.

'What a fine place you have!... how happy we are to find a house intact and to talk to civilians, we who for two months have seen nothing but soldiers!' He finds out about the damage, which his workmen, who are very skillful, may be able to repair. I speak of the famous doors of the barn. The lieutenant asks for a corporal of engineers. A soldier replies: 'He's gone to town.'

This amuses me. 'It's a great honor to Pronleroy to call it a town.'

'It seems a paradise to our men, though. Think of it — a place where they can buy things!'

The motors arrive, the staff takes up its quarters in the great hall, and especially on the steps where they have put the tables. Since they are so friendly about repairing the doors, I go to cut some flowers for the table... red dahlias and poppies; I go to the kitchen for some water.

'Are those for the general's table — those beautiful flowers?'

'Why, yes.'

'Oh, that will please him, and to eat upon a tablecloth!'

They come to ask me for signatures... it is the third time I have had to sign, and that they've sent a man on purpose from La Neuville. It is a matter of receiving, at an indefinite date, the sum of three francs, fifty, as indemnity for storing army beds in my barn. To-day I have to sign four times.

I have put an embroidered cloth, a bunch of roses, and an armchair in the modest bedroom which has been allotted to M. de Beauregard.

About four o'clock the motors return.

I meet the lieutenant in the kitchen; 'I believe, lieutenant, that we have some relatives in common, the Chabots of Boissière; I am the granddaughter of Madame de Maquillé.'

'So that's it; I was sure this morning that I had met you somewhere.'

We go to the dining-room... a box of biscuits quickly appears on the table, a bottle of cassis, a tall crystal pitcher, all dewy with the coolness of water. We are seated in comfortable chairs, the lieutenant puts the box of sweetmeats comfortably near, and we string together a long rosary of memories. I invite him to come in for the evening with some of his friends. I get a few things ready in the rose salon when the arrival of General Simon is announced, and he is introduced. The usual compliments about the joy of finding a house which the war does not seem to have touched.

'It's pretty well dismantled, though, general.'

'I knew well in Morocco, madame, that man who has given such luster to your name, Père du Foucault... he was a *saint* after being a *warrior*... and, which is less known, he was a man of letters and a wonderful talker when he found old friends. I am not speaking of the *Reconnaissance au Maroc* and of the *Itinéraire*, authoritative works published under his own name... I mean his researches on Touareg literature, that poetry from d'Ahaggar, a sort of acted ballad, which he gleaned in the course of his wandering in the South... they are published at Algiers without the author's name. I shall try, madame, to send them to you.'

I try to get information about the army. He says: 'We are still advancing, and it is the first time since the Marne that we can see the end of this war. The American forces are coming over in a flood. The armored cars are doing fine

work... we shall not, however, go to Berlin this year... the Boches remain terribly strong, but when they understand how they have been outplayed by Foch, their strength will slump all of a sudden, and then, in the war of movement which we are carrying on, the unexpected will happen.'

The general rises.

'Oh, we shall still have hard moments... I expect an alarm at any moment.'

'May God keep you and your division!'

The general goes away, answering gravely: 'May He keep us, indeed.'

There are flowers on the mantelpiece of the small pink salon... I have run all over the château to collect a few armchairs, and tables to furnish this little room suitably.

Through the open window the fragrance of the great honeysuckle vine on the façade comes in, the sky reflects the last pink gleams of the setting sun, while a slender silver crescent spreads a bluish light upon the left side of the park. The look of a sleeping countryside, calm, and far from the front.

Tac, tac, at the door. 'Come in.'

Lieutenant de Beauregard introduces a captain and lieutenant to me.

I offer them raspberry brandy, which seems like a luxury in these days. These gentlemen dare not smoke, so I set them a bad example with my English cigarettes.

Beauregard goes to pay a visit in the next room, to the portrait of his great-uncle, the Marquis de la Rochejacquelin.

'I can't help telling you, madame, the joy on coming into our rooms to see beds with white sheets... it hasn't happened to us for two months... the night before we found a cellar in a destroyed village — a good cellar, and we were very happy... and then, by the light of the lantern, we saw in the dirt floor all sorts of suspicious things... the Boches in retreat leave mines and deceptive contraptions to

blow up our resting-places. We abandoned our cellar to sleep in the open air. The next morning, the house not having been blown up, we were very sorry we had left.'

The captain spoke with emotion of the systematic devastation of the provinces... *nothing* was left. The people of the North, especially peasants, arrive in the dangerous zone for which passes are refused them, by leaving the railway far from their destination and crawling back by paths through the woods. Three days ago at a farm under fire from marmites, we were astonished to see one morning three women and a peasant washing themselves at the well in the courtyard where there were soldiers encamped; then the women carefully did their hair, using shaving-glasses lent by the soldiers. When we question them, they say, "What's the odds? We've come home.'"

August 24

Returning from Mass, I pass two soldiers who are talking. 'We're in a pretty fine place, you know — and well under shelter.'

'Why do you say that?'

'A fox like me in a château with duchesses... do you understand that, my buck?'

'There ain't no duchesses. The owners are marquises.'

'Check; it's all the same thing.'

Pronleroy has, in fact, become a part of the rear... peace and security reign there.

The captain and lieutenant with whom I spent the evening of the 23d of August, and who were killed on the 26th, died far from us at the attack on Coucy.

Pronleroy has finished its rôle of 'Château at the Front.'

THE END

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